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YANGTSE INCIDENT

by **LAWRENCE EARL**

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EDITORIAL

Don't let us drift into a new fuel crisis

THIS WINTER could provide a stern test of the National Coal Board's ability to meet the anxious demands of all its customers—industry, homes and the export trade.

The immediate worry is the fall in the stocks of coal. Last winter we had stocks of 16,600,000 tons; this year they have fallen to only 15,400,000.

Now, because last winter was exceptionally mild and consumption was lower than usual, we got through without hardship. But no one can guarantee that the weather after Christmas will again be kind or that the diminished coal stocks will be adequate for all purposes.

In the event of an unusually hard winter, like that of 1946-47, we could easily get into a terrible mess, with shortages of domestic supplies and repeated power cuts as the least of our troubles. It would be difficult—if that happened—to keep up even reduced exports of coal, on which we depend to pay for many of the goods we now import, including essential raw materials.

This is not a pretty picture; but it is not alarmist because it *could* happen if we were unlucky, or if nothing is done quickly enough to build up those depleted stocks.

A rapid increase in production is obviously necessary to put us on the safe side. But the Coal Board has not enough men—and it is losing them fast—sometimes at the rate of 1,000 a week. Manpower in the mines is down to 687,000, the lowest figure for fifty years, and one which cannot be allowed to drop much lower without disastrous effects on output in the next few years.

AFTER the war, when the figure first dropped below 700,000, great efforts were made to recruit enough miners to win the coal for industry, homes and export. But the response was small. The trend away from the pits was never really reversed—it was only checked.

So, today, as the general age level of the miners rises, and the young recruits are still relatively few, an even more rapid decline in numbers must be expected.

It is true that the Coal Board's big new development plan, estimated to cost £635,000,000, provides for a substantial increase of output with 80,000 fewer mineworkers. This is fine. But necessary and admirable though the plan is, we should face the

fact that it may make the immediate task of finding men still more difficult. For it includes the closing of a large number of old pits and the opening of new ones; a vast shifting around of the labour force.

All this will take many years, and is likely, in the interval, to produce an attitude of "wait and see" among potential recruits.

What can be done at once to arrest the decline of a tired and ageing labour force? Well, to begin with, the Government can stop taking reservists from the mines. In the present position, it is clear that coal should have equal priority with the Armed Services for manpower.

The recruiting of skilled young foreign workers, under sensible safeguards, is another measure that should not be ruled out.

MOST of all, though, we want inducements which will persuade our own young men that the time to take up mining as a career is *now*. If all the possible new entrants chose to wait for the full reorganization of the industry, we should have to go through a whole series of new fuel crises before we reached the security of adequate production.

Good housing is today one of the most effective baits any employer can offer. What the Coal Board has accomplished already in such areas as Fife, where mining communities are migrating from the dying Lanark coalfields, can be done elsewhere.

Greater safety in the mines will also encourage new entrants. Here the Coal Board must strive to offset the bad effect of disasters such as that at Cresswell last September.

It should tell the people more about the improvements achieved since the war. Mining is far safer today. Both the accident rate and the toll of occupational diseases have been slashed.

Obviously, even under its present handicaps, the Coal Board has a heartening story to tell the young men it is trying to attract into its employment. Never before has mining offered men a better life, of which their families can share the benefits, through high wages and good homes.

It is up to the Board, with the support of the Government, both to press on with its long-term plan and meantime to use every possible method that ingenuity and energy can provide to stimulate quick recruiting. The country must never again be left at the mercy of a hard winter.

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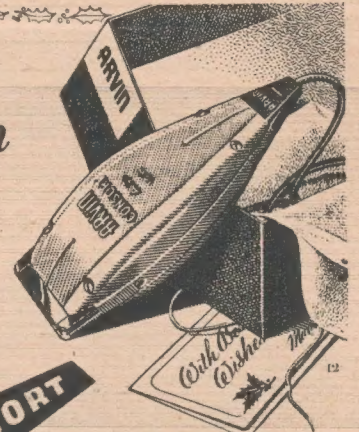
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Should a child of six face traffic alone?

MY ELDER BOY, AGED SIX, has to cross a very busy main road to go to school. I have not always been able to take him across and bring him back, and I have impressed upon him that on no account may he cross alone, but must ask a passer-by to see him over. This he has done, but within the last few weeks two people have said to him: "You're a big boy—surely you can cross the road by yourself now?"

I find it difficult to understand the attitude of these people. It makes me wonder if all the money spent on safety measures and on educating the public to the dangers children have to face on the roads is being thrown away. It's no trouble at all to tell children when to cross a road; I do it regularly. Could not a public appeal be made to pedestrians to offer this service?—Mrs. D. F. L., Newport, Monmouthshire.

Sheet That Vanished

THE OTHER WEEK MY LAUNDRY lost a fully marked pure-linen bed sheet which could not now be replaced for £5. For this the firm has just awarded me the magnificent sum of 4s. 6½d. Practically every week when my laundry is returned there is something missing. If there are no facilities for doing washing at home, could not some scheme be devised for insuring it at the laundry—or is the risk too great for an insurance company?—Mrs. JEAN TAYLOR, 53 Corsehill Street, London, S.W.16.

Some large firms do insure their washing. But insurance brokers do not issue policies on the same basis to householders who have a relatively small "wash." For one thing, it would be impractical for the housewife, who would have to pay the first £2 or so of any claim if she insured £20 worth of washing every week for an annual premium of 10s.

Conscript's Lost Year

LEAVING SCHOOL LAST JULY, I took a job with a leading firm in my town hoping to learn the principles of accountancy. Instead, I was placed in the filing section of a general office. Here I must remain until I begin my National Service in July next year—because, I am told, it would be wasted effort for me to forget in two years what I had learnt in one. If the national call-up age were changed from eighteen to nineteen, most young men would be able to get well started upon a trade or profession instead of marking time between school and the Services.—V. W., Glos.

R.A.F.'s Lost Recruit

THE BUZZ OF A MODEL AEROPLANE almost drowned my knocking on the counter at a Midlands recruiting office. A sergeant eventually appeared, but he showed nothing but a keenness to return to his plaything. I explained that I was an ex-Serviceman and a graduate in aeronautical engineering and wanted information about entry into the technical branch of the R.A.F. I was

handed one leaflet, which told me nothing I did not already know, and told to come back after I had read it. Needless to say I did not return, but secured a post in the aircraft industry. I wonder how many young men are being lost to the R.A.F. by the indifference of the recruiting staff?—D. D., London, N.W.2.

Mailbag Kicked Around

POSTAL AUTHORITIES REMIND us at Christmas time about tying and wrapping parcels correctly. But I suggest that they first put their own house in order. I was recently on a station platform when two men passed with a barrow stacked high with sacks of parcels. Three of the sacks were knocked off the barrow by a low arch. Two were picked up, but the third was kicked the remaining fifty yards along the platform.—PRIVATE T. ARMSTRONG, Heathfield Camp, Honiton, Devon.

Train The Bandits Wrecked

JOHN PRIEST DESCRIBED how bandits wrecked the train in which he was travelling in Malaya in December, 1949 ("I Lived With The Malay Bandits," November 4). Also travelling



"My son was travelling on this train"

on that train was my son—the police sergeant mentioned in the article—who sent me this snapshot.—Mrs. MACKAY, Bindal Muir, Portmahomack, Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland.

He Blames The Hikers

DURING THE LAST TWENTY YEARS I have been walking on Kinder Scout and Bleaklow, but have never had any trouble with the keepers such as Keith Ellis described in his article ("Hikers Take Over The Pennine Way," November 11). He attributes the sorry state of Four Jacks Cabin to the decline of grouse shooting, but I would say that the hikers are to blame. On many occasions I have seen them pulling stones from the walls, cutting chunks of wood from the door frames for firewood and using the cabin as a general dumping ground for all kinds of rubbish.—J. D. BETTECOURT, 98 Brooklands Road, Sale, Manchester.

When The Dancer Fell

WHY DO MEN, and husbands in particular, dislike ballet? The other night I wheedled my husband into going with me to the ballet. He behaved admirably for the first hour, and I thought he was really enjoying the exquisite music and dancing. Then a male dancer leaped across the stage—

and fell. To his everlasting shame my husband disgraced himself with guffaws of laughter.—BALLET FAN, Dublin.

Operation Was Refused

AS I HAVE BEEN DEAF myself since I was fifteen, I was most interested in Anna Friel's article ("A Miracle Operation—And I Hear Again," November 11). My trouble is also otosclerosis, but no surgeon will operate on me. Even so, I haven't let it spoil my life. I married when I was eighteen and now have three children and a happy home. Why aren't deaf people more open about it? I myself wear a badge with DEAF printed on it for all the world to see.—Mrs. LUCINA ARCHER, Dunroamin, Cradley Road, Netherton, Worcs.



Mrs. L. Archer

... A sufferer from otosclerosis for the last ten years, I was overjoyed to be told at our local eye and ear hospital that an operation might cure me. But I was disappointed when, on a second visit, the specialist told me that, being over forty, I was too old to have the operation.—LILIAN SAXTON, 31 Bolton Lane, Bradford, Yorks.

... I was told that this disease is definitely hereditary and that it may miss one or two generations, as in my own case.—Miss E. P., Coatbridge, Lanarkshire.

A medical expert says: "Patients over forty with long medical histories are not operated on, since the risk is much greater. I would not say otosclerosis was 'definitely hereditary,' but that it has an hereditary tendency."

They Saw How It Worked

BY INTERESTING CHILDREN in "how things work" and showing them round fire stations, railway works and so on, Jackson Butler ("Free Speech," November 11) thinks that most juvenile crime would disappear. Children are often taken round the telephone exchange where I work and, among other things, are shown how pressing the emergency button in a public call box gives a special signal. After almost every visit we get a crop of false emergency calls.—TELEPHONIST, Cumberland.

... I am secretary of a recently formed social study club at my school. We visit places of interest on one afternoon every week. We have already been to the telephone exchange and the fire station and have made arrangements to visit the waterworks and some local factories.—R. POOLE (aged thirteen), East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address are in the letter.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

COVER artist William Showell says: "I have often noticed that the presence of a pretty woman in a lift makes most men do quite a lot of things they would not do in the normal way. However, I think that the practice of removing your hat on entering a lift is more of a 'must' in the United States than it is over here. Personally, I dodge the issue, for I nearly always go around hatless."





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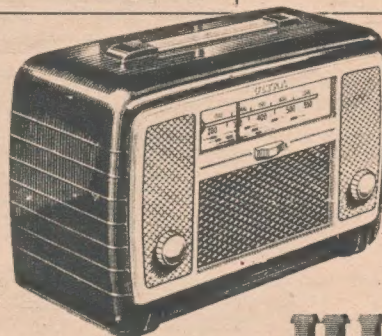
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At first, the outbreak was taken quite casually. A trickle of people passed through the vaccination centres. Then came the signs of public fear

FOR THE RECORD - A JOHN BULL SPECIAL

How Glasgow fought the smallpox plague

by *DON EVERITT*

Undetected and in its worst form, the disease was in the city. . . . Full story of a four-week battle against the world's most dreaded epidemic

SMALLPOX IS ONE OF THE MOST ghastly and infectious of all diseases. In its worst forms its mortality rate is more than fifty per cent. Even if it does not kill, it almost certainly maims or disfigures. And some authorities consider it more contagious than the common cold. In the past 500 years probably no other disease has been more destructive to human life. Epidemics have swept the world, killing hundred of thousands. Though the disease is still without curative treatment, it is less unmanageable nowadays. . . .

In the early afternoon of Friday, March 10, this year an Indian seaman named Moosa Ali was admitted to ward nine at Knightswood

Hospital, Glasgow, with pneumonia. He was given penicillin treatment and in two days his fever settled. At 5 a.m. on March 14, however, the duty nurse in ward nine, making a routine examination, found he had broken out in a rash. She screened off his bed, put down a bowl of disinfectant and notified Sister. During the morning Moosa was seen by Dr. Thomas Anderson, the hospital's consultant, and by a junior resident doctor. They had him moved into ward two for chickenpox treatment.

Already the rash was clearing rapidly. When Glasgow's senior fever consultant, Dr. Thomas Archibald, and a divisional medical officer saw it as a matter of routine during the next two days

they did not hesitate in confirming the existing diagnosis. On March 14 and 16, classes of medical students were taken to see the patient, and the speediness of his recovery was especially pointed out to them. By March 21 the rash had gone; on Thursday, March 23, Moosa was discharged.

Shortly before noon the following Sunday, Dr. Archibald was called urgently to see a sick nurse at Knightswood. Her name was Cathie Wilson and she had been working in ward two. She had been ill four days, at first confined to her room with a headache and backache, then admitted to ward seven with a septic throat. On the Saturday she had broken out in a rash; overnight it had spread alarmingly. When Dr. Archibald saw



First victim of the flu that started it all: Moosa Ali tells his story to some of his friends

her, he confirmed almost instantly what his colleagues had feared. Cathie had smallpox.

The doctor was hurried across to ward nine. There, Thomas Robertson, aged fifty-one, a pneumonia patient, had been feverish for the past four days and now he, too, had some spots on his forehead. The doctor, an elderly, quiet-voiced Scotsman, stroked his chin and frowned. "In the circumstances," he said, "I think we must regard it as smallpox." He was then told that the ward sister, Margaret Binnie, had also been complaining of feverishness during the morning. He examined her. "You had better go along with the other two," he said.

The hospital consultant, Dr. Anderson, briefly excusing himself, hurried away to make two phone calls. One was to Robroyston Hospital (which includes the city's smallpox compound), the other to the home of Dr. James McMillan, one of the city's divisional medical officers, who was on call that day.

Meanwhile, Dr. Archibald, by now on his way back to his own hospital, Belvidere, was deep in thought. He had suddenly remembered that on the previous day one of his own patients, a boy of twelve named Ian Cameron, who had suspected meningitis, had also broken out in a sparse rash which he had thought was chickenpox. More significant, from February 27 until March 15 the boy had been a Knightswood patient—in ward nine. As soon as the doctor got back he had a look at him. His suspicions were confirmed.

All Clues Pointed To One Man

Ironically, the Knightswood doctors could have pin-pointed the source of the infection even before Dr. Archibald made his diagnosis of Cathie Wilson. The facts that it was concentrated on two Knightswood wards, that the disease is of Oriental origin and has a twelve-day incubation period led them to only one person—Moosa Ali.

Their wrong diagnosis embarrassed the doctors only momentarily. Smallpox has always been difficult to diagnose. Few doctors ever see a case, anyway. Its first symptoms—chills, headache, fever, nausea—are similar to those of pneumonia and influenza. When the rash appears, several more common complaints are at first brought to mind—chickenpox, measles, scarlet fever,

sypilis, scabies, impetigo. Over Moosa Ali the Glasgow physicians had even more excuse. Chickenpox has fewer stages than smallpox and is of correspondingly shorter duration, yet Moosa's rash—as the medical students were told—cleared even quicker than an average chickenpox. And Moosa was said to be well vaccinated.

The situation was serious. Smallpox had been in the city undetected and in its most contagious form for almost a fortnight. Caused by a virus which enters the body in the breath, the disease becomes abundantly infectious on the day before the victim sickens—that is, normally, about the eleventh day of incubation. It can be carried by almost any article and, unlike many other deadly diseases, can become airborne for several yards. It can also be conveyed by a third person not himself infected.

Contacts Had To Be Traced

The disease strikes with varying intensity. Black, or haemorrhagic, smallpox is nearly always fatal. Even during milder forms, dangerous complications can set in—pneumonia, pleurisy, bronchitis and abdominal disorders. Blindness is possible. Smallpox is also one of the most unnerving, painful and repulsive of ailments. Often by the eighth or ninth day of the rash the patient becomes a dripping, swollen, unrecognizable mass of pus. The odour from the breaking pocks is putrid. The swelling rash on the mucous membranes in the mouth, throat and nostrils not only brings great pain but can obstruct the breathing. And, with a high temperature, the patient is often in a wild delirium.

Smallpox attacks all ages but is most fatal at the extremes of life and in invalids and pregnant women. Though medical treatment is merely palliative—rest, frequent skin cleansing and sponging and daily irrigation of the eyes—the disease is not unavoidable. Successful vaccination gives reasonable immunity; even if a smallpox victim is vaccinated within seven days of being infected it will give him some protection. Thus, isolation of victims and vaccination of the people who have been in contact with them is imperative in an outbreak.

It being a Sunday when the Glasgow outbreak began, there was little the medical officers could

do. At Knightswood the Northern Division officer, slight, bespectacled Dr. McMillan, gathered details of the three cases and arranged for an address list of all staff, patients (including those discharged within the last ten days) and recent visitors to be prepared. He later made similar arrangements with Belvidere Hospital. Dr. James Bell, an assistant divisional medical officer, examined the inmates and staff at the Indian Seamen's Hostel, where Moosa Ali was staying, but he found nothing suspicious.

For hours that Sunday Knightswood Hospital, now quarantined, was like a beehive. All the staff and patients were vaccinated. Beds, linen, furniture—everything in wards two, seven and nine was disinfected or carbolicized. The nurses and doctors who had worked in them scrubbed themselves from head to foot and changed their clothes. Orders were also given that when Nurse Wilson and Thomas Robertson were moved their mattresses were to be burned.

Volunteers Opened The Compound

Out at Robroyston Hospital, on the edge of the city, the smallpox compound was being opened. The three wooden huts, almost in the fields to the windward of the main block and surrounded by a five-foot fence, had not been used for eight years. Though always kept half-prepared, they needed bedding, linen, food, medical equipment—and staff. A call for volunteers went out to the hospitals in the area. From the dozens who answered it, thirteen men and nine women—a doctor, nurses, ward maids, porters and ambulance drivers—were picked. Among them was the mother of Cathie Wilson. In ones and twos throughout that Sunday night they reported at the compound. They came in their oldest clothes—down-at-heel shoes, laddered stockings, patched trousers—knowing that when it was all over these would be burned. Throughout that night also, a special ambulance brought in the first cases. With them, as a safeguard, came Moosa Ali.

By now another victim had been found—in another hospital. The patient was Mrs. Jean Toner, who had been admitted to Ruchill Hospital on March 23 with a diagnosis of pneumonia. Mrs. Toner was a part-time nurse at Knightswood. She had been working in ward two.

On Monday morning, Dr. Ian Weir, the bulky, sandy-haired divisional medical officer for Central Glasgow, arrived at the Public Health Department feeling particularly fresh and ready for work. It was fortunate that he was. Having spent Sunday driving in the country with his family, he was the only officer who had heard nothing of the outbreak. As he read the report on his desk from Dr. McMillan, his habitual worried frown set deeper and deeper: the Central Division was right in the thick of things.

Automatically, Weir and the four other divisional medical officers told most of the department's 120 sanitary inspectors and some of the nurses to drop everything and stand by. Shortly after ten the lists arrived from the hospitals. The compilers had been thorough; they even named visiting clergymen, refuse men, window cleaners, two electricians, six painters who had been working on the outside of the buildings and a man who had vacuumed a ward.

The Big Search Started

After a brief conference on tactics with their chief, Dr. Stuart Laidlaw, the medical officers armed some of the sanitary inspectors with the lists and detailed them to track down those people named who had not already been vaccinated at the hospitals. Mostly patients' visitors, they numbered several hundreds. The inspectors' job was to advise them to go immediately to the Health Department for vaccination and to ask them if they had the slightest symptoms of illness. If they had, the inspector was to call for a medical officer immediately.

With the remaining inspectors and nurses, the medical officers then formed squads and, having

Continued on page 28

Ladies' man of TV

by MURIEL SEGAL

Running women's programmes, he says it's quite an asset to know nothing about cooking or fashions

WHEN SIX-FOOT ex-Lieutenant-Colonel S. E. Reynolds, O.B.E., rushes home full of enthusiasm to show his wife how to cook kippers in a jug or a new way to cut a skirt, she is apt to smile patiently and say either that it is all nonsense, or that she has always done it that way anyhow. "S. E.," as he is known to everyone in television, admits that he knows nothing whatever about cooking, dressmaking, fashions or any other women's interest subject. "But," he says, "that is quite an asset. If an expert can put into my thick head exactly what she wants to show the audience, then I can put the programme over."

Survey figures show that at least 200,000 viewers—mostly, although not entirely, women—are regular followers of the all-feminine appeal programmes which Reynolds directs. *Designed for Women*, which started three years ago, was the first programme especially for women to go over television anywhere in the world. The programme is made up largely from suggestions and requests sent in by women viewers, who keep a keen, though kindly, eye on it. The other day, after a pretty girl had been demonstrating some slimming exercises, a viewer telephoned to say that she thought the girl was lovely, but what about the ears of corn growing out of her head? Sure enough, the patterned wallpaper used for a background in the studio did give this effect, and a plain-coloured curtain was substituted for the next session.

Beauty Hints Are Often Flops

Viewers feel that the people on the screen are right there in their sitting-rooms with them, joining their family circles. But this illusion of intimacy can have its drawbacks. For example, beauty care, an important item in any woman's programme, has not, so far, been successful on television. Viewers do not like seeing hair brushing, for instance, going on at such close quarters. When a beauty expert came along to talk about care of the hair, demonstrating the right way to "brush and brush twenty strokes a day," the audience having their tea around their television sets watched the hair flying and complained of being put off their food.

By far the most popular afternoon programme is cooking. Much of the huge fan-mail comes from the men of the family, who want this programme put on at a time when they, too, can be at home to enjoy it. Last week an invitation to join in a Christmas cooking project brought a thousand letters by the next morning's post.

Cooking for a television programme requires a cool head. Under the glare of the lights and the critical gaze of a few thousand housewives ready to pounce on the slightest slip, television cooks soon learn to keep calm in a crisis. Resident chef Philip Harben tells of one awful day when he opened the oven door with a flourish to show how beautifully the sponge had risen—and found he had forgotten to turn on the oven. On another occasion, having forgotten to put the



"Quite clear?" Reynolds (right) checks with TV cooks Marguerite Patten and Philip Harben

curry powder into the curry, he improvised blandly: "... and this is to show how we work in the curry at the last moment."

With the high-powered studio lighting keeping the temperature well over 100 degrees, TV cooks say it is like working in a permanent heatwave. Everything melts, ice-cream drips, salads wilt and the fat runs so fast that pastry-making is a problem. Other details Reynolds has to watch include avoiding shiny pots and pans, because of the reflection of light, and seeing that the cook does not turn his back on the audience, who must see clearly what he is doing. "If only we had smellavision," he says.

Reynolds, though he has produced every feature except ballet and is one of television's oldest inhabitants, still prefers to remain a guest producer. He joined the B.B.C. in 1934 and wrote and played in over a thousand radio programmes. Nobody is more amused than he to find himself immersed in women's topics, about which he knows so little. Currently he is enormously puzzled over a fact he learned in a dressmaking programme: "Hip measurements are taken seven inches below the waist," and he imparts this piece of news with great excitement to anyone handy.

There is only one rehearsal of *Designed for Women*—on the morning of the day of the programme. Usually Reynolds sees the guest artists for the first time at the rehearsal, and nobody knows what she may do or say until the actual show goes on at teatime. Take, for instance, a typical programme which opened the autumn series. First came a shy, slight girl who turned out to be an anthropologist, just returned from a year in the Belgian Congo, studying a completely unknown tribe called the Lele of the Kassai. From this glimpse of adventure, S. E. switched over to his guest oboe player, Helen

Gaskell. Women instrumentalists are the part of the programme most difficult to find, and a woman oboe player is particularly unusual. Explains Helen, "It's because the great drawback to oboe playing is that a girl is apt to look so hideous with blown-out cheeks and staring eyes." Then the cameras moved up to the other end of the studio to start work on Mrs. Florence Kirk, down from Manchester to show how to make loose covers for the sitting-room chairs. With pins in her mouth she smoothed cretonne over chair-backs, and Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Jones could see exactly how it was done as they watched from their own somewhat worn arm-chairs at home. "Women love to see how things are done," says S. E.

The Cameras Find Them Out

One quality is essential for television: This is sincerity. The ultra-sensitive camera and mike pick up every subtle nuance, every hidden inflexion. Any lack of sincerity immediately becomes starkly obvious. "Also," says Reynolds, "intelligence is essential. The lovely blonde who looks a dream on films is a complete flop on TV unless she has personality. Even the models who act as mannequins for fashion programmes have to be quick-witted and resourceful."

Finding a new hostess to replace Jeanne Heal, who started in *Designed for Women* right from the beginning, has not been easy. A hostess must be a pleasant-looking, photogenic, knowledgeable and domesticated type, one whom other women will like. Women viewers come to regard her as a great friend, as a neighbour who comes into their homes. Candidates for the job have to undergo gruelling tests. Is she a typical housewife? Does she look well from this side? Is her voice a bit stagy? Well, she's got to please 200,000 women—and S. E. Reynolds. THE END

Dinner for the Boss

She was ambitious. She didn't want her husband to be a clerk all his life. She wanted a sudden, spectacular change—and got it

by BRETON AMIS

AS HE TIED clumps of bronze chrysanthemums with green bass, Cyril Markham could hear his wife answering the phone in the cultured drawl she reserved for her impoverished but genteel relatives who often invited themselves as non-paying guests.

He was thankful he only had one relative, and a rich one at that. Uncle Walter had started as a carpenter and made a fortune out of three-ply furniture. The money would eventually come to Cyril, which was why Marjorie had married him, but the old man had been dying for five years and seemed quite capable of lingering at death's door for another five.

Cyril's strong, stubby hands were proof of his plebeian stock. He ought to have worked with them, but Marjorie had no intention of being the wife of a carpenter, so he pushed a pen for Prendle and Co., sitting in a little glass box in the general office and drawing nine pounds a week as a senior clerk who had been with the firm for twelve years.

Soon his wife came into the garden—a tall, graceful woman whose aristocratic nose and long white hands went with her cultured drawl.

"That was Mr. Prendle," she said, and Cyril dropped the tangled skein of bass.

"The boss? You should have called me, Marjorie! What did he want?"

"Must you call him 'the boss,' as if you were an office boy? Apparently you told him Christine had passed her scholarship examination to the grammar school, and he very kindly phoned to congratulate me."

"But what on earth for?" Cyril wiped sweat from his brow with the back of his hairy arm. "He's never shown any interest in us before."

"I know he hasn't, so I took the opportunity of inviting him and his wife to dinner tomorrow night. By the way he accepted I'm sure he expected it."

What Cyril had dreaded for years had come to pass. He hated his wife for her ambition, her arrogance, and her scarcely veiled contempt for him.

"It's what you should have done years ago, instead of acting the humble underling," she said. "It may lead to promotion—at last."

"I don't want promotion," he muttered. "You shouldn't have done it, Marjorie. You've no right to interfere in office affairs."

"I think it's time I did, unless you want to sit in your glass hutch for the rest of your life, paying out higher salaries to men younger than you. You might be one of Prendle's branch managers, and then the general manager or even a partner. What we have to do is to make a good impression on the Prendles."

"You shouldn't have done it," he repeated. "You're building hopes on nothing. I'll never get promotion and I don't particularly want it."

His defeatism irritated her. After thirteen years as his wife she still wondered why she had married this dull, insignificant man whose only attraction had been a rich uncle with a supposedly weak heart. He was slow-moving and clumsy, with weak blue eyes and a deceptively intelligent brow.

"You'll have to forget your inferiority complex and try to do us justice," she said coldly. "We have a nice house, a well-mannered child, and I think you can trust me to put on a meal that

won't disgrace us. I'll phone my brother Reginald about the wines."

"The Prendles won't expect a banquet from a clerk."

"I'll let Mr. Prendle know we can only live on your salary because your uncle helps us. No need to mention that you have to gouge every penny out of the old skinflint."

"Uncle Walter has been very generous," Cyril said defensively.

"In the last few years his conscience has been pricking," she agreed, "but he could do much more for us. Anyway, leave the entertaining to me. After all, I did keep house for father when he was in the consular service. We can at least show the Prendles we know how to live."

NEXT day at the office Mr. Prendle stopped at the glass box. "Tonight at eight, Markham? Very kind of your wife. I like to meet my staff in their own homes."

Cyril felt a sickness in the pit of his stomach. It lasted all day. As soon as he reached home he helped himself to a large whisky, and Marjorie, coming from the kitchen, nodded.

"Dutch courage is better than none. You'll be all right if you leave our share of the conversation to me—your manly silence might easily be interpreted as intelligence."

He had another whisky while she was bathing and changing. The sight of her in a soft, smoke-grey frock with her mother's pearls round her slender throat and pearl studs in her small ears startled him. It stressed the social difference between them, because she looked cool, charming and self-possessed and he felt hot, sticky and apprehensive.

"Open the sherry," she said, "though Mr. Prendle will probably prefer whisky and soda. Mrs. Clarkson is helping me in the kitchen, so everything will go smoothly."

She re-tied his tie and tried to alter the set of his coat. Their twelve-year-old daughter Christine came in, slim and elegant in spite of her school tunic.

"You want me to do my homework in my bedroom, Mummy?"

"That's right, dear—you fade away after you've met our guests. Mrs. Clarkson will see to your supper."

The doorbell rang, and Marjorie went leisurely to answer it. Cyril heard her greeting their guests, sending Mr. Prendle into the lounge while she took his wife upstairs. Then he was shaking hands with his bland, bald boss and introducing Christine, who chatted so gaily that he could retire to the bottles.

"Whisky or sherry, Mr. Prendle?"

"Oh, whisky, please, Markham—better for the liver. These your own chrysanthemums? Wish I could grow 'em like that—you must have the magic touch."

"Perhaps it comes from working in a glass-house," Cyril surprised himself by saying, and the sally brought a roar of laughter.

"You're a different man, away from the office, Markham. I always say the only way to get to know a man is in his own home—and a very nice home you have."

Marjorie and the plump, comfortable Mrs. Prendle came in for sherry. Christine gracefully

endured another introduction before vanishing, and a few minutes later the foursome moved into the dining-room, where the table was laid with the heavy silver and cut glass that had belonged to Marjorie's father, together with the silver filigree containers for the wine bottles and an ornate silver centrepiece piled high with dessert. Cyril could see Prendle mentally calculating how it could be done on a senior clerk's salary, but Marjorie was already explaining, with rather amused candour.

"This is a special occasion for us, so I thought I'd use the nice things my father left me. He was in the consular service, and we entertained a lot before my marriage."

The conversation flowed pleasantly round Cyril without engulfing him, Marjorie served the courses herself, fetching them from the service hatch, and also admitted to being her own cook.

After a sip at the burgundy, cautious and then appreciative, Prendle settled down to enjoy himself, his jowls gradually taking on the rich hue of the wine. Over port and walnuts he relaxed and expanded.

"I'm very annoyed with you, Markham," he boomed. "You've been on my staff for twelve years, and you've been holding out on me—depriving me of excellent hospitality. Why? Your wife says she likes entertaining."

"Cyril is very independent," Marjorie said composedly. "He prefers to be judged on his own ability rather than by his wife's cooking. And I admire him for it."

"Do you?" Prendle chuckled shrewdly. "I wish others were as modest. You'd be surprised at the indigestion I've suffered because I make it a rule to accept when invited out by my staff. But in you he has a gilt-edged investment, Mrs. Markham, which as a business man he ought to use."

"I'm not in the consular service," Cyril said, but wine had blunted the edge of his bitterness. "I'm quite content."

"A man of your age shouldn't be," Prendle declared, "and I can't believe that you are, now I've seen you at home."

LATER, pouring himself another glass of port, Prendle grew boisterously confidential. "This is off the record, Markham, so we may as well be frank with one another. You've heard that I'm making an appointment to the Bristol office as soon as I've found the right man. It's a new branch, Mrs. Markham, with new clients who will expect plenty of entertaining."

"Out of a manager's salary?" Marjorie asked, and Prendle chuckled again.

"There'll be an allowance for the right man. How does it sound, Markham?"

Cyril shook his head. "I'm sorry, sir, but we have our roots here. The house is ours, thanks to my uncle; Christine is doing well at school, Marjorie has her friends, and I have my garden. I shouldn't like to leave."

Marjorie saw the flicker of annoyance pass over Prendle's face. She forced down her rage and spoke in her soft drawl.

"Mr. Prendle has been frank, Cyril, so let's put our cards on the table. Bristol is a sub-branch, Mr. Prendle, and Cyril thinks he is worth something better, in the London office. He deserves a chance. Mr. Warburton, your general manager, is due to retire. He joined the firm



"You're building hopes on nothing," he said. She didn't bother to veil her contempt

round about the same time as Cyril, I believe."

"He did, and he made a considerable financial investment," Prendle said tersely. "Some form of investment is generally required of our branch managers, Mrs. Markham, but I'm not asking that of your husband."

"Naturally, you wouldn't expect him to be in a position to make it, on £9 a week," Marjorie said sweetly, "but as his uncle's heir, Cyril will shortly be in a position to invest anything up to £10,000. In fact, he'll be looking for a safe investment on which he can keep his eye. His uncle's lawyers will confirm his expectations."

Cyril saw Prendle glance at him in surprise, assessing him anew as a man who kept his aces to play at the right moment. He saw the glitter of triumph in Marjorie's eyes, and he spoke in desperation.

"Uncle may live for years yet, and may change his will. I'm sorry, Mr. Prendle, but I have no intention of buying promotion. I think you had better stop arguing my case, Marjorie. I like the work I'm doing, and I've no wish to increase my responsibilities. My uncle supplies the money I need to supplement my income, so why should I struggle for what I don't want? That ends the matter, as far as I'm concerned."

There was an odd look in Prendle's eye, a look half of admiration, half of amusement. "You know," he said, "I like you, Markham. Perhaps we can arrange this little matter after all. I don't know which is the most successful, your modesty or your wife's advocacy. I want you to take a little holiday. Someone else will do your job. . . . I think I can promise you Warburton's position very soon."

Marjorie's laugh gave no hint of her excitement.

"It's what we expected," she said, "and what we've been working for. You've got yourself a bargain, Mr. Prendle, as I think you realize. Fill the glasses, Cyril, for a toast to the new manager of Prendle and Company."

When the Prendles had gone, Marjorie turned on him, anger and contempt getting the better of her satisfaction.

"You're a bigger fool than I took you for, Cyril, with your stupid talk about being content. Fortunately, Prendle chose to mistake your idiocy for cunning, but you aren't going to let me down, or him. I've put you on top and there you'll stay. Do you understand?"

His mild blue eyes met hers, and for the first time that evening he laughed. "Thanks, Marjorie, for getting me a few days' holiday. It's just what I need to put the garden into shape."

THE police came for him a week later, while he was planting out the spring bulbs. They had a warrant for his arrest for the embezzlement of £4,300 over a number of years. The deficiency had been discovered by his successor in the little glass-house.

He brushed soil from his capable hands and went into the house, where Marjorie was waiting with an arm round their frightened daughter and blazing hatred in her eyes. He took a telegram from his pocket and gave it to her.

"This came yesterday, Marjorie. Uncle Walter died yesterday, so there'll be plenty of money for you and Christine. If you hadn't been so eager to gain me promotion I could have put back what I'd taken and covered it up so that no one would ever have been the wiser. As it is, I don't suppose you'll see me again for three years or more."

"You're guilty?" she whispered. "You're an embezzler—a thief? But why—?"

"Uncle Walter disliked you so much he wouldn't part with a penny while he was alive. You kept nagging for money, so I gave it to you and cooked the books."

At the door he paused. "I know you hate soiling your hands, but there's half a row of bulbs still to be put in." He shook his head a little sadly. "Pity I shan't see them come up this year."

THE END

WHEN A DOCTOR examined Mrs. Jean Hertton, of Aldershot, one day last August and ordered an immediate operation, he overlooked two things: Lester Ferguson was due to broadcast in *Your Song Parade* that night; and Mrs. Hertton was a Ferguson fan. Gently but firmly she refused to have the operation. The incident might have closed there had not her nurse rung up the B.B.C. Shortly after the broadcast, there was a telephone call for Mrs. Hertton from Lester Ferguson himself. "I'm happy to have the operation tomorrow," she told him after a short conversation. "I'll be all right now."

Mrs. Hertton, like seven million other listeners who tune in to Ferguson's programme, had responded to his offer of friendship. "When I sing," he says, "I try to communicate with my audience as individuals. My aim is to feel they are friends."

At thirty-two, Ferguson is six feet tall and weighs fifteen stone. Though a plastic surgeon had to put in some tricky work repairing his right ear and remoulding his nose after a beating in the ring when he was a heavyweight boxer, he is still ruggedly handsome. A crop of lush, black curls, nicely coaxed at the front to hide a minor recession, suggests equally a devil-may-care Irishman or an Italian tenor. Actually he is an American of Swedish and Scottish ancestry, who came to Britain with the U.S. Army in 1943 and still retains his American citizenship.

Contempt For Social Barriers

Although he is best known as a popular radio and variety artist, his first London engagement was that of leading tenor in the New London Opera Company at the Cambridge Theatre in 1946. For the impresario Jay Pomeroy, he played lead rôles in *Tosca*, *Rigoletto* and *La Bohème* for eighteen months. "I reckon I hold the world record for *Bohèmes*," he says. "In one year I sang a hundred and fifty." Since then he has taken the lead in two musicals, starred in a film, *The Fatal Night*, been featured in two radio series before the present one, and made top billing on the halls.

In his determination to promote good relations, he calls complete strangers "dear friend," slaps them on the back and says how pleased he is to meet them. They leave with "God bless" ringing in their ears. At the B.B.C. he banters the liftman and even has a mock fight. At the end of his last broadcast series he took the whole orchestra to the local pub for a drink.

This contempt for social barriers works both ways. When Princess Elizabeth came to chat with him during the interval at the Cambridge Theatre in 1946, she confessed she had not been able to see him very well from where she was sitting. "Heck, you're royalty," boomed Ferguson. "You can move up to a good seat in the circle." The Princess smiled, but did not explain that she had been sitting in the royal box.

Forgot His Lines—And Smiled

On the stage he exploits his tremendous stage presence to "sell" this free-and-easy personality to the audience. After a preliminary anecdote, he looks modestly down, flashes a smile which means: "Don't worry about me—I'll be all right," throws back his head and crashes into song. Once, in "*La donna è mobile*," in the first programme of his first series, he lost his way. While he fumbled round for the words the orchestra ad-libbed. Finally he went into the closing cadenza after singing only one verse. Where other singers would have glossed over an embarrassing situation, Ferguson beamed at the audience and said: "There comes a time in every man's life when he wishes he could drop through the floor." The audience loved it. Their hero was as human as they were.

Ferguson also makes a point of finding out just what his songs mean to his audience. Fan letters help a lot. For instance, "Believe me if all those

Lester Ferguson—the magnetic voice

by KEITH ELLIS

He is an operatic tenor who gives the people what they want—sweet memories that can be sung and not crooned. "It may sound corny," he admits, "but so does everything sincere"



Ferguson spends his leisure at home with Valerie, the Welsh girl he married two years ago

endearing young charms . . ." is among his most popular numbers. "For years," he says, "I'd known the words, 'The beauty of her face . . . will always live and the beauty of her soul far outshines the mark of time on her face.' But I'd never appreciated them until I had a letter from a man whose wife's face had been disfigured by smallpox. He still remembered her as a pretty young girl. You really can believe what you're singing when you get letters like that."

One woman asked if he would sing "The Rosary." In 1914 she had heard it with her mother. The old lady was now dead, but Ferguson's voice would "bring back memories of a beautiful evening." A little girl whose father was out fishing on the North Sea asked for the same song, because hearing it was a good omen for his return. A man blinded in the first World War requested "I'll See You Again." He had never given up hope that some day he himself would be able to see again. "All this may sound corny," says Ferguson, "but then, everything sincere does. Doesn't Churchill's 'blood, toil, tears, and sweat' sound corny, too?"

Most of his repertoire consists of songs that evoke such memories rather than provide new experiences. He specializes in traditional English ballads, popular arias, sugary Italian folk-songs and "pops" of long standing. This harping on memory is the reason for Ferguson's appealing mainly to people over twenty-one.

His Fans Stormed The Stage

He *did* have bobby-sox trouble when his shows were broadcast from the Civic Theatre, Poplar, but that was exceptional. As the series progressed, his audience, consisting largely of teenagers wearing ribbons of his favourite colour, light blue, became more and more enthusiastic. One night they stormed the stage. In the fracas, Ferguson lost his coat-tails.

"They were holding on to me in sheer excitement," he says. "Then somebody pushed. I don't think it was deliberate." When the show was transferred to Broadcasting House, a corps of commissionaires stood by for trouble. None came.

His fan club of 500 members dates back to his opera days. The secretary, Miss Pamela Fiddaman, explains that it is changing from a circle of opera-lovers whose interest centres on Ferguson to a mass correspondence society. Though its members are predominantly young, the fans who gather in his dressing-room are usually middle-aged. He calls them by their Christian names. They call him Lester, or more intimately, "Fergie." He never refuses to see anyone or sign an autograph—one night he signed 150. After a performance he fills his Morris Minor with fans who live on his route. "If anyone wants to be friends with me, I'm so happy for it."

This back-slapping *bonhomie* is but one manifestation of an exuberance he brings to everything he does. Whether in a taxi, restaurant or just walking down the street, he is likely to illustrate a quiet conversation with a song or aria sung at full vent. Once he went down on his knees in a crowded restaurant and presented the manager with a drooping carnation as he sang the "Flower Song" from *Carmen*. Neither managers nor customers were surprised: it was what they expected from "Fergie."

Sang On The Mountainside

Eric Arden, his B.B.C. producer, says: "I've never met anyone so enthusiastic. He comes into my office like a whirlwind, talking about half a dozen things at once. When I suggest we get down to business he rushes off to see someone else. Finally he comes back and we work hammer and tongs. At the end of an hour with him I'm drooping in my chair. He seems quite fresh."

Lester James Ferguson was born in Philadelphia in the United States of America. Each



At the Civic Theatre, Poplar, Ferguson had bobby-sox trouble. Once he lost his coat-tails

summer his family visited his grandfather's farm, where Ferguson remembers hearing Caruso's "Vesti la giubba" on a record-player. Sometimes his mother sang American folk-songs. At any rate, he acquired an early interest in music, which an old farmer encouraged by giving him a record of Gigli singing "Musica proibita." By the time he was eleven he was in the habit of going on to the mountainside in the evening or early morning and singing "until the tears rolled down my cheeks."

At school, an intensive course in art in addition to his ordinary work left little time for music. However, he joined the school choir and was ordered to sing bass, his treble being so powerful that it drowned the others. At sixteen, he decided to have singing lessons.

This presented a problem. He had to spend the next two years at preparatory school and several years after that at college. All this time, he would be earning no money. He had done a certain amount of amateur boxing and, though he could not be paid for his services, promoters were allowed to hand out coupons that could be exchanged at sports shops for new kit. For a time he paid for his lessons with these. Later, he decided to change his status to that of semi-amateur so that he could be paid expenses. During the next three years he fought thirty-six heavyweight bouts and won twenty-seven.

Even this did not bring in enough money. He took other jobs. He became in turn waiter, long-distance lorry driver, racing driver in speed trials, window-cleaner on high buildings and dancing teacher at a skating-rink.

Tenor Lead In Touring Company

At nineteen he entered college to study architectural engineering. Meanwhile, he kept up his singing, and joined a quartet which specialized in presenting folk-songs at private parties. At this time, he thought it unmanly to sing in a high voice and forced himself down to bass-baritone. When the tenor was off form, however, he sang the high notes, too. At twenty-one he left college to sing full-time. A year later he was singing tenor leads with the Philadelphia Opera Company, and after that with a touring company.

In 1941, he decided that war was coming to America and joined the army so that he could get a year's training in advance. Two years later he was posted to Britain. Except that his job had a lot to do with morale and Anglo-American liaison, and that he did a good deal of entertainment organization in his spare time, he refuses to discuss his war experiences.

One day he was at the Stage Door Canteen in London when a performer failed to appear. "Why don't you give us a few arias?" asked the organizer. At first Ferguson refused. ("I believed in singing properly, not messing about.") Eventually, after much pressure, he agreed. A few weeks later he found himself at a private audition before Sir Thomas Beecham and others.

Sir Thomas pronounced him an asset to British opera and secured his demobilization in Britain. Soon after, he was engaged to play tenor leads in the New London Opera Company.

One fan who saw all his *Rigolettos*, all his *Toscas* and seventy of his *Bohèmes* says that the same faces could be seen night after night in the packed upper circle. The run established several things. He had a fine voice, good looks and an attractive personality. He could act, too. When the season ended, he got his logical desert, a chance in films.

Wanted Variety's High Fees

After *The Fatal Night* he went back to the stage, played leads in *Carissima* and *Belinda Fair*, made two opera tours of the Continent and one of Ireland, and broadcast twice with Gerald. At the beginning of this year B.B.C. Light Music scouts were looking for someone around whom they could build a song programme in friendly rivalry to Variety's Donald Peers. Ferguson was chosen, and succeeded so well that the series was extended from four to ten programmes, and finally to nineteen. Research figures showed that Ferguson was now drawing over seven million listeners in spite of the opposition of *Ray's a Laugh* on the Home Service.

Ferguson's phenomenal rise to popularity has been achieved only by abandoning almost completely the opera that set him on the road. There is some doubt among his fans as to whether he is doing himself justice in variety. To cover his singing lessons and other commitments, Ferguson wants the high fees of variety and popular broadcasting, at least for a time. Later, he may return to opera. "It's my duty to give people what they want," he says. "That's what they pay for. I only insist that the songs can be sung and not crooned."

Everyone who works with Ferguson agrees that he takes criticism well. He listens to suggestions and tries them out. If he is satisfied, he modifies his work accordingly. All the time he is studying to improve. "I've never had time for a social life," he says. "I could never go to late parties because I have to get up early to study. Even as a child I never had any buddies." His leisure is mainly spent at his home in Bickley, Kent, with his wife, Valerie, a Welsh girl whom he married in 1948. He rides, plays golf, collects old clocks and occasionally postage stamps.

He has never conquered the fear of failure. "When you're on your way down, people hit you harder than a louse. Once I lost a fight. As the referee counted ' . . . two, three, four, five . . . ' I could hear the crowd yelling: 'Get up, you no-good bum.' Whenever I won a fight after that I thought: Thank God I'm not down there." As a singer, Ferguson is now winning consistently. Realizing that the upper slopes are extremely slippery, he still studies hard. As he says, "the good things will wait for the man who's willing to work for them." THE END

YANGTSE INCIDENT: *Part 3 of Lawrence Earl's*

Kerans gets his orders

A gallant rescue bid had failed. The shell-battered *Amethyst*, aground in the mud, was alone again—grimly awaiting the next move from the Chinese Communist guns

AFTER *Consort* had passed on down river, an unaccustomed and gloomy silence hung over the battered frigate. *Amethyst's* seamen, still edgy and excited, gathered together in little groups to chew over their experiences and their chances of escape.

The swiftness of the events that morning of April 20, 1949, had been bewildering. At twenty minutes past nine, *Amethyst* was sailing peacefully up the Yangtse, heading for Nanking and a routine changeover with the destroyer *Consort*. Suddenly a battery of the Chinese People's Liberation Army hidden on the north

bank of the river had opened fire. Shell after shell hit *Amethyst*. Within fifteen minutes she was lying aground off Rose Island in midstream. *Consort*, sent immediately from Nanking to her rescue, had made a gallant but unsuccessful attempt to tow her off the mud, but had been forced to withdraw down river by the heavy fire of the Communist guns. Now the *Amethyst* was alone again, and a menacing silence had settled over the river.

It had been the first time in action for nineteen-year-old Able Seaman John Ray. His boyish face was streaked with dried sweat. His light brown hair looked as if it had never been

combed. There was still a tinge of tight excitement in his voice. "I didn't feel so good," he told his mates, "but things happened so fast I didn't stop to think of what was going on or what our chances were."

"Me, too," Boy Dennis Roberts agreed. "As soon as the shooting stopped, though, I had time to think. I got scared. Damn scared." The deep dimple in his chin had gathered a pocket of burnt powder. "I still am," Ray admitted. That was the feeling on the ship.

Weston, Berger, Strain and Hett talked *Amethyst's* position over quietly and seriously. Shells had hit every other office large enough to be used for the purpose, and the wireless room was now being used as centre of operations. "Perhaps *Consort* will be back to give us a hand after dark," Hett offered tentatively. He was unaware that *Consort*, in her brave attempt to knock out the Communist battery, had suffered serious damage and had had nine of her crew killed and three wounded. "Perhaps," Weston said. He felt very tired. Nobody looked hopeful.

The Communist guns, though quiet now, were still there, mounting a grim guard. Everyone on the ship was conscious of the threat they offered. The frigate was still stuck in the mud. Officers and men alike felt dispiritedly flat, prodded by the subconscious, unreasonable reminder that they had had a chance to escape and had failed to do so.

After a while Weston remembered that he had not eaten since breakfast. He tried to eat but he couldn't seem to keep anything down. He tried to drink water, but that was no good either.



Kerans leading, the strange procession plodded on in search of *Amethyst*. Suddenly a torch flashed ahead. From the dark came a British sailor

epic new book

Finally he said: "Will somebody get me a horse's neck?" A "horse's neck" is a favourite Navy drink, made of brandy and ginger ale. Weston sipped at it gratefully. It stayed down. For several days he could swallow no other form of nourishment.

There were new and urgent problems to be faced. Many of the wounded still on board were delirious. They were moaning with pain and asking for help. By now, unfortunately, all the tubonic ampules of morphia on board had been used up. There was, it is true, a further supply of morphia on the ship, but it was in a different form and, with the doctor dead, no one knew if it was safe to use. ("It was erroneously supposed," Weston wrote later in his official report to the Admiralty, "that a patient who had been receiving a morphine chloride preparation could not be given later a sulphate preparation when the former ran out.")

Lieutenant Strain had during the afternoon managed to repair the wireless set. French tapped out an urgent signal requesting delivery of tubonic ampules of morphia.

Little Appetite For Eating

At about five o'clock that afternoon Hett asked Cook Griffiths: "Do you think you can organize a meal for the ship's company?"

"I'll do the best I can, sir," Griffiths said. He went to see McNamara in the N.A.A.F.I. canteen. From him he collected some tinned soup. Then he drew pickles from John McCarthy, the stores petty officer. He cut up the cold beef which he had cooked but had not served for the noon meal, and boiled enough potatoes to go around. Tea and bread and butter completed the menu. Even though they had had no mid-day meal the men ate with little appetite.

During the evening an incident occurred which deepened the gloom. The day was fading when Weston, with considerable effort, managed to get out of his chair and on to his feet. The pain in his chest had spread. It burned and throbbed. "Give me a hand, will you?" he asked Boy Wilfrid Parnell. The boy jumped to his assistance. Weston rested his right arm around Parnell's shoulder and, with a stick in his left hand, hobbled down to the after messdeck to see how Lieutenant-Commander Skinner, *Amethyst's* badly wounded captain, was faring. He saw there was nothing he could do to help.

Ancient Method Of Suicide

Near Skinner, one of the Chinese river pilots was moaning. When he saw Weston he released an agonized scream. His face was distorted with pain. "Shoot me!" he begged Weston. "Please shoot me!" The back of the pilot's head had been torn off by a piece of flying shrapnel.

Weston shook his head. The Chinese stuffed his right hand into his mouth with great force. Then he tried it again. "He's been doing that all afternoon," Hett said, shaking his head.

"Poor bastard," somebody remarked. "He's going crazy with the pain and there's nothing we can do about it." Weston said: "No. He's trying to commit suicide. He's trying to stuff his tongue down his throat and choke to death. Poor blighter!" In fact, this was an ancient Chinese way of committing suicide when no weapon was at hand with which to do the job.

Weston hobbled around, still leaning on Parnell, to see the other Chinese pilot who was unhurt. "Your friend is badly wounded," he told him. "That means you're the only one who can show us the channel if we get off the mud. Don't in any circumstances leave the ship." The pilot nodded. He seemed unhappy about his new responsibility.

At six o'clock, with daylight fading, Hett stood at the ship's rail on the shoreward side. "Hallo!" he shouted. "Shore party, hallo!"

Some sixty men—able-bodied and wounded—had got ashore that morning when Weston had



Lt.-Com. Kerans (second right at back): exclusive picture taken on *Amethyst* during her captivity

ordered partial evacuation of the ship to save further casualties. In the chaos of the evacuation under fire, they had split into various groups. Some, under Petty Officer Heath, had already crossed over from Rose Island to the south bank of the river and had been met on the mainland by friendly soldiers of the Chinese Nationalist Army. But there was still a number of stragglers ashore on Rose Island. One of them, in reply to Hett's shout, called out from the deep grass: "Hallo, *Amethyst*!"

"What's the situation there?" Hett asked.

"The Chinese are friendly; but there are mines about and we don't like to move."

"How many are you?"

There was a pause. "Fifteen."

"Right. Monaghan will be going ashore in the whaler to try and locate a Chinese doctor and get medical supplies. Wait there. He'll bring you back out when he returns."

Monaghan did not know that Weston had ordered the second Chinese pilot to remain on board. He climbed into the whaler through an escape hatch which opened off the petty officers' messdeck. With him he took as interpreters the ship's tailor (one of the eight Chinese attached to *Amethyst*) and the second pilot. He took both since they spoke different dialects and that might be useful. The pilot spoke a northern Chinese dialect and the tailor spoke Cantonese.

It was not until they climbed out of the whaler and scramble! up the steep bank that Hett, still at the ship's rail, noticed the pilot. He was carrying a leather gladstone bag. "Hey, Guns!" Hett shouted anxiously to Monaghan.

"Yes?" Monaghan turned on the lip of the

bank. He was 150 yards away and a light breeze made it difficult to hear.

"Make sure the pilot comes back. He's got his bag with him."

But, when the whaler returned some time later, the pilot was not in it. Monaghan explained: "He's coming back at eight o'clock with the Chinese doctor." At eight the pilot had not returned. At nine he was still missing. The *Amethyst* never saw him again. No one on board dared voice the cliché about rats deserting a sinking ship. It was too close to the bone. Now, if *Amethyst* got off the mud and could run for it, she would have to take her chances with the changing, treacherous channel. She would have to take the river at high speed without a pilot experienced in its shifting ways. . . .

Heath's Party Move On

Not more than a quarter of an hour after Bannister and Martin had been put down on their stretchers on the floor of the hut, four Chinese coolies entered. Their flat, yellow faces were quite impassive. Two of them lifted Bannister's stretcher and looped the handles through yokes over their shoulders. The remaining pair did the same with Martin. They carried the wounded sailors down a narrow lane of the village, which lay near the south bank of the river, where the Nationalist soldiers were entrenched awaiting the coming Communist assault across the river.

"Hey!" Bannister protested. "Where are you taking us?" He couldn't see if Heath and the other evacuees were following along behind. The bearers, who understood no English, remained



Amethyst's cook, Petty Officer George Griffiths: he was cooking a joint when the firing began

silent. Bannister still had a hard time breathing. There was a constant gurgling in his throat and it worried him. He fought for breath and against a rising fear that he and Martin were being separated from the rest of the evacuees.

Martin and he were carried along for ten minutes. Then they were lowered gently to the ground in front of a small stone cottage with a thatched roof. One of the coolies brought out a packet of Chinese cigarettes and put two into his mouth. He lit them carefully and put one between Bannister's lips.

"Thank you," Bannister said. The cigarette seemed to help. After a five-minute rest they started off again. Soon they were making their way along a path that zigzagged through the rice paddies. Bannister managed to twist his head far enough to see, with tremendous relief, that Heath and the others were marching along behind them.

Village Of Refugees

When the party halted at the little village of Fang-lo-ching, they found it crowded with refugees. Heath's party assembled together in the central square. Bannister and Martin were carried into a small wooden shed. The two wounded sailors rested there silently. In spite of the care their bearers had taken, the journey thus far had weakened them considerably. Presently two of their shipmates, Leading Seaman Mullins and Signalman Thomas, came in for a visit. Thomas had one arm in a sling.

"I suppose you're wondering what's happening, Paddy?" Mullins asked Bannister.

"Yes, I am."

"We're trying to get to Shanghai. We hope to get a couple of lorries sent down from Shanghai to pick us up. How do you feel?"

"I can't breathe, like."

Mullins held a thumb up. "Aw, you'll be O.K., Paddy." He felt embarrassed talking to the wounded man, thinking that it might just as easily have been him.

At half past six, in the deepening dusk, the party set off again. Bannister and Martin were lifted once more on to the shoulders of their bearers. They were carried out of Fang-lo-ching along narrow lanes bordered with overhanging trees. To Bannister in the gloom it seemed as if they were passing through a thick jungle. Overhead, against the dull sky, he could see bats darting and dodging. Thousands of insects buzzed by.

Some time later they came to a group of large barns. Nationalist soldiers occupied some of the

barns and their paraffin oil lamps lent the interiors a certain reluctant cheerfulness. Bannister was carried into a barn which had no lamp. He could see nothing, and when his bearers left he didn't know if he was alone or not. His wound began to throb. He shifted on his stretcher, trying to make himself more comfortable, and as he moved he rolled off on to the hard mud floor. He squirmed on the mud, trying frantically to get back on to the stretcher. He was so weak he couldn't make it.

The struggle had irritated his wound and the pain was now almost unbearable. "Will somebody please help me back on my stretcher again?" He thought he had shouted the request, but in his weak condition it came out as a faint croak. Nobody heard him. For a while Bannister mercifully lost consciousness. When he regained his senses, he was still in very great pain and almost at once lost consciousness again. The night went like that. Sometimes he was aware that he was alive and wished he was not. Sometimes he was quite oblivious to reality.

At daybreak, a group of Nationalist soldiers entered the barn. Bannister had never seen them before. The soldiers put him back on his stretcher, making little clucking sounds of concern. Bannister looked around the barn for his shipmates, but there was none in sight. *Have they left me behind?* he thought with fear.

The soldiers carried him out of the barn and into a small wooden hut. Martin was in the hut, lying on his stretcher. He grinned. "Gosh, am I glad to see you!" he said.

Bannister sighed gratefully. It came out a gurgling wheeze. "Where are the others?" "I don't know."

"They must be off getting the lorries for us."

"Sure," Martin said. He sounded uncertain. The two wounded youths were carried off

again on their stretchers. "Hey!" Martin shouted, a little wildly. "How'll our mates know where we are?" The bearers grinned and said nothing. By now both Bannister and Martin were completely confused. *Where are these Chinese taking us?* Bannister thought over and over again. One thing was becoming quite clear: he and Martin were definitely separated from the main body of *Amethyst* evacuees. . . .

When Wilkinson, the engineer officer, returned to *Amethyst* in the whaler with Monaghan that first evening, he had a talk with Weston. Then he climbed down to the engineroom and ordered the boilers flashed up and a head of steam to be raised. It takes time to raise steam. By half past ten there was sufficient pressure. "All set," Wilkinson shouted up the voice-pipe. "Right," Weston said. "Full astern, both engines!"

Amethyst Gets Off The Mud

Both engines were put full astern. The screws, free of the mud, churned the water at *Amethyst's* stern until it became opaque. The ship did not budge. Wilkinson tried desperate variations. The port engine was driven full astern, the starboard engine full ahead. Then they were tried the other way around. It was no use. The mud's sucking grip was as solid as ever.

Up above, Weston said: "All right. We'll have to lighten ship. Hold it, Chief, until further orders." Wilkinson and the rest of the engineroom crew waited down below. Meanwhile, Weston got a party at work on the upper deck. Anything that was loose and heavy and could be spared was thrown over the side: awning stanchions, kedge anchor, steel derricks. At the same time Weston ordered oil pumped over the side from the forward tanks. This was meant to lighten the bows. A scum of oil spread over the surface of the Yangtse and was carried downstream by the swift current.

At midnight, Berger rang down to the engineroom. "Chief," he said, "we're going to have another try." His voice sounded weary but hopeful. Wilkinson, unaware of the upper-deck activity, did not share his optimism. He did not expect anything but a repetition of the first failure. "Right," he said, grimly. He tried the same tactics: one engine full astern, the other full ahead; then both engines full astern. A few minutes later the elated buzz came down from the bridge: "We're moving, Chief! We're moving!" *Amethyst* had indeed reluctantly begun to move. . . .

Kerans Starts His Journey

At ten o'clock on the morning of April 21, Lieutenant-Commander Kerans, a slender, intense young man in his mid-thirties, left Nanking, where he was stationed as assistant naval attaché to the Embassy. His ultimate destination, although he was far from certain now that he would reach it, was the frigate *Amethyst*. He went by jeep and was accompanied by the Embassy's assistant military attaché, Lieutenant-Colonel R. V. Dewar-Durie. In the jeep he carried medical supplies—including morphia—a case of beer, two thousand cigarettes and a chart-folio of the Yangtse. A signal had come up from *Amethyst* advising Nanking that some of her charts had been destroyed in the shelling.

The roads were rough, dusty and uninviting. The miles stretched out, loosely packed with rubble. There were detours every so often, some of them only bullock tracks. Others were gouged with deep ruts. The jeep churned up the dust into a cloud which settled down on Kerans and Dewar-Durie, coating their faces and hands, creeping up their nostrils, getting into their eyes. Crowds of peasants made their awkward way along the road on foot, hesitating dumbly, like cattle, when the jeep came along, and blocking the way. The seventy-two miles from Nanking to Chingkiang took three and half hours. By the time they got there the two officers felt stiff and sore and tired.

Before he had left Nanking, Kerans had called

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WHO'S WHO

Lieut. WESTON, *Amethyst's* first lieutenant; Lieut. BERGER, navigating officer; Lieut. HETT, director-control officer; Lieut. STRAIN, flotilla electrical officer travelling on *Amethyst* as passenger to Nanking; Mr. MONAGHAN, commissioned gunner; Stoker Mechanic BANNISTER and Boy MARTIN, two of the wounded in Petty Officer HEATH's party of evacuees from *Amethyst*.



The ordeal is over—Lynda's passed. L-testers are sometimes rewarded with a spontaneous kiss

Lynda takes her driving test

by PHILIP HOPE

She thought I looked rather grim, and maybe I was. As a driving examiner I meet some awkward customers—and some deadly ones, too

NOBODY IN BRITAIN TODAY can qualify to drive a car, tractor, motorbike, invalid carriage, steamroller, trolleybus or any other self-propelled vehicle on the roads without first passing a driving test.

As a Ministry of Transport examiner, I know that forty per cent of these tests end in failure—though many may pass when they try a second or third time. I know, too, that of the thousands who are tested each year, many believe the fantastic, face-saving myths about the L-tester's terrifying methods, designed—they whisper—deliberately to trip up the tyro.

What is the truth about the driving test, and how can a beginner be reasonably sure of passing? Take the case of Lynda Gaye. She was simply a name on a list when she presented herself one morning at our rather dingy office with

the "L" sign outside (one of forty testing centres in Britain, staffed by 300 examiners).

First she signed her name (a precaution against anyone taking the test by proxy, which has cost a few heavy fines). "Any physical disabilities—broken arms or legs?" I asked. "No," she smiled, "I'm all in one piece—so far." She read out the number plate of a lorry standing about twenty-five yards away (people who fall down on this eyesight test are failed without driving at all), and we sat in the car. "I want you to drive in a perfectly normal manner," I said, and we started off. I directed her along one of our approved routes.

So far as I was concerned it was just another test. We do up to ten a day, one every forty-five minutes. It does not matter to us whether or not candidates pass. There is no bonus or

commission on results. Our job is to apply the requirements of the test—set out on a Post Office form—as fairly as possible.

Lynda Gaye has since told me of her reactions that day. "You looked," she says, "remarkably grim. In the car, you had your head down, and kept scribbling notes." Though it unnerves some candidates, note-making is not necessarily to the driver's detriment. How else can the tester be sure of remembering details as they happened? We use a shorthand of various initials. "K.L.," for example, might be a reminder of what the driver did at a keep-left signal. "O.W.L." is my private note when a car goes over the white line.

Miss Gaye's first scare came when going up a steep hill, soon after her test began. We stopped, and, as part of the test, she re-started up the slope—smoothly enough and without slipping backwards. Then we were stuck behind a horse-drawn coal-cart. She could not pass it because of traffic from the other direction. "Any minute now," she said frankly, "I shall have to change into that beastly bottom gear; I hate it."

What really shook her was seeing the antics of the young man who had started out a few minutes ahead of us with another examiner. He had bounded away in his car from outside the office with a kangaroo hop, a sign of bad clutch control. Then, at a standstill on the hill, he had again let the clutch in with such a jerk that he had stalled his engine and begun to run backwards. The examiner had grabbed the handbrake to prevent them crashing into a wall. The sideshow was an unusually severe test for Lynda Gaye's nerves.

Show Of Nerves—And Knees

Nerves are the unknown quantity in a driving test. We do our best to soothe the candidate by keeping calm ourselves. When somebody I have instructed to turn left turns right instead, I usually overlook it—the first time. When an anxious young doctor in the driver's seat hitched up his trousers until he had both knees showing like a seaside paddler, I restrained my laughter and we stopped for him to calm down. When a woman propelled us slowly into the back of a dairy van, I made no comment.

Fortunately Miss Gaye kept her head. She carried on up the hill, coming to the required halt at the major road ahead sign. We passed through the High Street's congestion of buses and bikes, while she gave the appropriate hand signals. Next, at my direction, she reversed into a side turning, pulling up close to the nearside. I asked her to make a complete turn-around. This part of the test seems to worry women more than men; they often mount the pavement, sometimes even nudge a fence. But Miss Gaye shunted backwards and forwards neatly, using the handbrake so that the car did not run free and bump the kerb when she changed gear.

Though it is not the examiner's job to provoke mistakes, the test is *not* a lesson, and in giving directions we leave it to the candidates to use their own judgment. This is probably what starts the rumours that we trick drivers into failing. "You can stop for a rest when you like," I said to Lynda Gaye. She was wide awake. "Not on this bend," she said firmly, "and wait till we're clear of these entrances."

Parked with the engine switched off, I asked a few questions about the Highway Code. For example, "What does filtering mean?" Answer: "Proceeding as indicated by a green arrow, despite the red light"—*not*: "Stealing from parked cars," as a candidate who confused it with pilfering once solemnly told me.

Miss Gaye's test had gone well. "I was dying to know whether I had passed," she said later. But an examiner does not give his decision until he and the candidate return to the office. Twice successful candidates have kissed me spontaneously. Once I was offered a five-pound note

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Waste brings them wealth

by IAN BEVAN

THEY HAVE A SAYING in Yorkshire: "Where there's muck, there's money," and it proves true every day in Britain's mammoth, sprawling waste trade and reclamation industry. Originally based on the shabby marine stores of slum backstreets, and the rag-and-bone men with their handcarts, the industry now has millions of pounds invested in elaborate plant which each week process thousands of tons of old clothes, waste paper, scrap metal and all the other flotsam and jetsam of everyday life. From this muck, men have made great fortunes. More important, in peace and war they have been able to keep the nation's factories supplied with many basic raw materials.

The statistics of their industry are impressive. Paper mills deal with four tons of waste paper every minute of the working day. Flock and rag mills have an output worth £16,000,000 a year. About 10,000,000 tons of scrap metal go into Britain's annual production of nearly 16,000,000 tons of steel.

The word "waste," of course, is a misnomer. So far as the people of this industry are concerned, nothing is wasted. Everything can be used to make something else—everything, that

Any old thing, from battleships to laddered nylons, can be turned into money by Britain's vast scrap industry. There's only one item the rag-and-bone men won't touch: men's braces

is, except men's braces. No one has found a commercial use for old braces, because the cost of separating the rubber from the fabric is more than the cost of buying new materials.

Braces apart, nothing is ever too old or too worn for the experienced waste dealer. He knows that old rags can be used to make the paper on which banknotes are printed; that waste paper itself can be sorted into a hundred or more different grades, all of which have special uses; that the wing-tips of aeroplanes, the interior panelling of motor cars, and the steel girders of new buildings have their origin in the waste basket or the scrap heap.

"The ingenuity of waste merchants passes all

understanding," says A. P. Hughes, secretary of the Waste Trade Federation. "It's a very important and very serious business. What's more, waste is one of the few basic raw materials produced in this country. Apart from a little natural lead and tin, for example, the scrap heap is our only indigenous source of non-ferrous metal. The more waste we use, the less raw materials we have to import."

The house-to-house collectors who deal in pennies and sixpences are at the base of a commercial pyramid which builds up into companies dealing in millions. Many of these firms are more than a century old, and have acquired a commercial dignity which their directors think is slighted by the phrase often used to describe their progress—"from rags to riches." But there is still the chance of a waste trader winning his way from rags to riches in his own lifetime. One of the big men in the Yorkshire woollen trade, owning several large plants and employing more than 200 people, started as a tatter in Dewsbury—pushing a handcart and crying "any old rags, bones or bottles"—less than forty years ago.

Tatters Found Treasures

"You can never tell what a tatter might achieve," says Richmond Field, a Dewsbury marine store dealer who was a tatter himself in his youth. His father was a lamplighter who collected old rags in his spare time to supplement the meagre family income. As soon as Richmond was old enough he went tatting with his father. When he was demobbed after the first World War, he and his brother Ernest started business as marine store dealers, and now they own the horses and carts which many of Dewsbury's tatters use on their rounds. In return for free use of the carts, the tatters sell what they collect to the Fields, who resell to the big companies.

In the old days rag-and-bone men used to pick up some unexpected treasures, and Richmond Field has a set of five valuable Toby jugs in his parlour which his father bought at various times for a few shillings. "As for clothes," he says, "it was nothing for my father to come home with eight or ten suits which were good enough for him and us to wear for best. He'd bought them for a shilling or two. The rag men don't get clothes like that now. Things are pretty well worn out before people sell them to the tatters."

Yet surprises do occur. A girl was sorting a bundle of rags in the Field warehouse a few months ago when a purse dropped out of an old coat and fell at Ernest Field's feet. He opened it and shook two small coins from it into his hand. "Two farthings," said the girl in a disgusted tone. "The right sort of farthings," said Field. They were gold half-sovereigns.

One of the most spectacular stories in the waste industry is that of Thomas W. Ward, Ltd., which has grown, in little over seventy years, from a one-room coal and coke business into an industrial combine controlling more than sixty works, depots and subsidiary companies throughout the country.

Thomas Ward started as a coal merchant in



Mrs. Harris began stamping down waste paper at thirteen, is still doing it at seventy-one



This was once H.M.S. *Rodney*; sludge is fired before breaking continues



Obsolete London trams yield plenty of scrap. Then they will be burned

Sheffield, where his customers included the owners of a small foundry. Because he was supplying fuel to feed the furnace, he learned there was a market for metal to put into the furnace, and he started collecting it. Soon he was collecting it on such a scale that the Government sold him an old warship, and subsequently his company was buying old ships by the hundred. The firm has broken up *Rodney*, *Revenge*, *Nelson* and *Royal Sovereign*.

Waste can be divided, roughly speaking, into two types. There is "virgin waste," or surplus material which is discarded in most manufacturing processes. The rough edges of paper trimmed from magazines, the tinfoil left from a square sheet when a machine has stamped out a set of circular milk-bottle tops, the bits of cardboard discarded by a press making tooth-paste cartons, poplin discarded by a machine mass-producing shirts—all these, and many other industrial leftovers, are bought directly from the factories.

The other sort of waste is reclaimed material: material which has already served a useful purpose in one form but has become worn, or old-fashioned, or unwanted. It may be a battleship or it may be a pair of grey flannels. Only the bigger firms can afford to deal in battleships, but the trousers are generally sold by the householder to a rag-and-bone man, perhaps along with a pair of old brass candlesticks and some empty jam jars. The tatter takes it all to the marine store dealer, who separates rags from metal, and metal from glass, then sells them to wholesale merchants. The merchants each have their specialities. They have big warehouses where skilled staffs sort the waste.

A Lifetime Sorting Paper

Sorting is the real art of the waste trade. From the mixture that comes out of the nation's waste paper baskets the trade sorts more than a hundred different grades of paper, all of which have different uses and widely different prices. Most of the sorting is done by women who, after long experience, can tell one grade from another by touch and sight.

In a Thames-side warehouse, Mrs. Louisa Harris has been sorting waste paper for fifty-eight years, since she was thirteen, with time off to get

married and have six children (one of whom now works in the same warehouse). She is determined to work two more years to make the round number. Part of her job, after sorting the paper into sacks, is to jump into the sacks and force the paper down. At seventy-one, the jump from ground level has become a little high for her, so the management has provided a set of steps. On piece work she nets about £5 a week, compared with five shillings when she started as a girl. "It was a bit hard, in those days, finding the money to buy the new pair of boots I needed every month. Stamping down the paper wears out shoe leather quicker than anything."

The waste rag industry is faced with a sorting problem through the increased use of synthetic fibres. Sorting was a fairly simple job when fabrics were mostly pure wool, pure cotton, pure linen or pure silk. Even when the natural fibres were combined with one another, it did not take an experienced girl long to tell which was the dominant one in the mixture. These days, with the almost limitless permutations and combinations of artificial fibres such as rayon and nylon, it frequently needs a chemist and the full resources of his laboratory to tell what's what.

Whenever a new synthetic comes into common use, the waste trade goes to work on finding what use can be made of it when its first life is finished. Within the past year it has solved the problems of converting most forms of nylon. Used nylon stockings, valueless a few years ago, now find a ready market.

"This is an age of experimental fabrics," says W. Johnstone, one of the industry's veteran leaders. "I don't suppose anyone outside the trade can imagine what the postwar introduction of nylon did to us. Why, some types of nylon were so strong that our rag-tearing machines couldn't cope with them. No sooner do we solve one problem than they give us another." He picked up some white, silk-like material from his desk. "Looks like nylon," he said, "but it's not. It's something new from abroad. None of it coming in as waste yet, but we have to be prepared. Our chemists are working on it already. When people begin throwing it away, we'll be ready to make use of it."

Scrap prices can fluctuate as violently as the

prices of other important raw materials. Not long ago, the price of old-woollen stockings varied £50 a ton within a few days. Best quality woollen rags are currently worth up to £500 a ton, and the price will probably go higher.

Although tatting is not recognized as a skilled trade, it calls for quick judgment, sound commercial sense, and a self-confidence which remains undismayed by barking dogs and temperamental housewives. From the housewife's point of view, it takes a lot of household waste to add up to five shillings, although if she keeps it well sorted and clean it can reach a tidy sum quicker than most people realize. In good times it is often hard to persuade her to take the trouble of collecting it for the sake of the money, and shrewd tatters have found it pays to offer other rewards than cash. The most popular bait is goldfish.

Profit From Goldfish Routine

"Show the goldfish to the kids first," an old tatter explains. "Any kid will fall for a fish, and start screaming blue murder if mum won't get him one. Mum doesn't want to pay good money for a goldfish, although she could get one cheap enough if she only knew. But we're right there, in front of her, offering a live fish which will make the kid happy, and all she's got to do is give us a few old rags. We get maybe three pounds of old wool stockings, and the kid gets the fish."

One team working the goldfish routine in the Midlands draws an average of £200 a week from the rag merchants. Out of this the tatters have to pay for the hire of a lorry, petrol, and, of course, for the goldfish. Net profit is about £130 a week, which they split between five. Despite such rewards, few young men are coming into the game. Most tatters seem to be in their fifties, and their children mostly work in factories or study at universities. Not, of course, that a university education is any bar to tatting.

Richmond Field remembers an Oxford graduate, known to him as Charlie, who left a good job in Stoke-on-Trent to live as an old clothes man in Dewsbury. "He did much better than average, collecting from the big houses where they liked his educated approach," says Field.

THE END



ILLUSTRATION BY

Monroe flashed by the pits like clockwork. But this time he was trailing a stream of blood-red fire. It didn't look much of a blaze at first

THE KILLER

by B. L. JACOT

If the Boss didn't withdraw from the race, young Monroe would be killed. That was the situation

I MAY AS WELL START by telling you that the Tipo 6 Masoni was a witch. You can spell it differently if you want to. Grand Prix cars are queer things. Some are sweet and reasonable and they seem to be doing everything they can to give you a nice ride. Others seem out to get you, like a vicious horse. The Tipo 6 was one of these.

I ought to know something about fast motor-cars. I was born quite a while ago now, at Wolver, and apprenticed at fifteen down at the old Moonbeam Works. I've been working for His Nibs, now for donkey's years, and I know His Nibs, too, and all there is to know about his stable of racing cars. But when he let young

Monroe take over the Tipo 6—well, that was different.

I joined Lord Harmer's racing stable at the time Hitler was getting good and busy, and that was the time His Nibs was spending a lot of money and driving himself all over Europe. Everyone calls his Lordship His Nibs round our shop, but not to his face.

His Nibs is very proud of his racing jobs, and prouder still of the old timers he still has around that his father had and raced on the Continent. No one is allowed to monkey round with any car of his — you'd get your head bitten off at the suggestion. He keeps some of the old favourites

Continued on page 35



Lord Harmer looked at the boy. "How would you like to drive her?" he said

Down on Christmas Dinner Farm

by CHRISTOPHER MILLER

Jack Hewer rears turkeys—that is, he saves them from drowning, choking, hanging, starving, and dying of fright at bits of paper

LATE ONE RECENT NIGHT, Jack Hewer, a Norfolk turkey farmer, was suddenly shot out of his armchair by a terrific *awk-awk-awk* coming from his breeding pens. Dashing outside, he found a thousand of his birds stampeding and flying into the fields nearby. For several minutes he was baffled, as again and again the birds flew into a wild panic. Then, in the moonlight, he saw a small scrap of white paper being carried across the pen by the breeze. Removing the menace, Hewer spent the next hour and a half gently shepherding his flock back into the pen. Inside, he found three had died in the crush.

To him this incident was nothing extraordinary. A jovial, blue-eyed heavyweight with a Norfolk brogue and a rolling gait, Hewer spends most of his working days trying to prevent his turkeys from committing suicide. It is a job calling for ingenuity and vigilance, for self-destruction is something for which the notoriously stupid turkey has real talent. Left to himself, he will find a hundred and one ways of departing this world.

The turkey readily makes friends with carnivorous animals, is literally frightened to death by low-flying planes and thinks nothing of diving under a tractor wheel. Sometimes, he gets so tired of life he just lies down and lets his fellows trample him to death; at others, they peck him to pieces. The turkey will also choke, suffocate, drown, hang and, failing all else, he may even starve. Says Hewer: "Horse betting is about half as much a gamble as rearing turkeys."

On a twenty-acre farm at North Pickenham, a village lying between King's Lynn and Norwich, Hewer raises 2,000 birds every year. Comparatively successful at reducing untimely death among his flocks, he is in the top flight of Britain's turkey farmers.

This Christmas industry, which will market some 750,000 birds this season for close on £3,000,000, is made up mostly of specialists, the majority of whom live in East Anglia. Some are breeders, some run hatcheries, and some raise young birds to market size or take them from market on to the slaughter. Hewer is one of the few men who combine all these functions. Without leaving his farm, he can convert the



Hewer picks his breeding stock with care. Even a surly expression will disqualify

gleam in a stag turkey's eye into a bird ready for the oven. He has customers all over the British Isles, and to those in the surrounding districts of Norfolk and in London he gives a personal delivery service.

To the people who eat turkey this Christmas, Hewer's assertion that in theory the meal should be relatively cheap may seem odd. Actually, the bird does convert its food into meat more efficiently than most. Only its strong suicidal tendencies, coupled with its affinity for fatal diseases, put it in the luxury class.

Even though Hewer is on hand twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, continually supervising his three men and touring the farm to remove menacing bits of paper, string and suchlike, some birds still manage to get themselves killed.

One autumn evening he and his wife strolled out to see if the flock had roosted all right. To their horror, in one pen the perches were

empty and in a corner hundreds of young turkeys were piling themselves up in an area not much bigger than a hearth rug. "When we eventually separated them, nearly forty had suffocated or been squashed to death. There was no reason on earth for their doing it. The other birds were quite all right. It was just their damn stupidity, I reckon."

The turkey sets an almost spartan standard of living. If one of the flock turns a little sickly, the rest often peck him to pieces. Once, Hewer ringed the legs of certain birds to carry out a test. A few mornings later he found one of them had trapped his foot overnight in some wire netting, and the others had scalped him.

Inquisitiveness, too, is partly responsible for the high mortality rate. Not long ago, Hewer hung some tit-bits in the pens, arranging them in slip-knots. Next morning he found two birds had painstakingly nosed their way through the nooses and hanged themselves. Earlier this year



Towards Christmas, Hewer or his wife patrol the farm every night. Both are pretty good shots

he left a large watering-can in one pen while he went to water the other. When he returned a few minutes later six young birds had hopped in and drowned. Others were blithely lining up by the can.

On another occasion, Hewer was amazed to find three of his birds strutting around with their beaks turned perpetually skywards. Examining them, he found large pieces of kale stalk stuck in their throats.

"But the worst incident I can remember happened during the war. One black night a returning bomber fired a Very light just over the flock. It was like hell let loose, turkeys squawking and flying everywhere. Of course, in the blackout we couldn't do a thing. We searched for the birds for two days and found some of them two miles away. I lost count of how many we lost."

It was the farming slump of the thirties which brought Jack Hewer into this precarious business. "In 1934 I was helping to run my parents' farm at Massingham and I discovered that their few turkeys were almost the only things making any money. It dawned on me then that, no matter how badly off people are, they will always try to have a good time at Christmas."

Lived In Fields With Birds

Consequently, when a few months later Hewer married a farmer's daughter from nearby Clay-next-the-Sea, they decided to set up in turkeys. They were fanatically keen. Except for the raw winter months when they stayed with Mrs. Hewer's parents, they lived in the fields with the birds, in a tent. Nursing their increasing flock through sickness and danger for a year or so, they then found themselves able to enlarge their home with a couple of lorries. By 1939 they had added huts, and when the war came this country residence became their permanent home.

In 1947 the Hewers moved to Pickenham; here, Jack Hewer decided to start a semi-intensive breeding system of his own devising, which would limit the turkeys' suicidal bids without the severe restriction of the wire-cage system. It has been highly effective, raising the

proportion of successfully reared poults from fifty to sixty-five per cent.

Today, Hewer raises only broad-breasted bronze turkeys, a variety with a high proportion of white meat. He has developed his own strain with the kind of feet, breast, feathers and other characteristics he likes. Every November he picks his breeding stock—fourteen stags and 120 hens—for the next year. This selection involves as much care as that of an M.C.C. team. Every bird is examined from claw to comb and even knock-knees, bandy legs or a surly expression will disqualify it.

Spring That Came Too Early

Immediately after Christmas the birds are herded into a pen and left. "I let my turkeys do their courting naturally and in their own time. Some people don't." Hewer refers to the few intensive breeders who use artificial lighting in the breeding cages to simulate spring conditions. Under this system the stag turkeys have to start getting their lighter nights a little earlier than the hens because it takes them longer to get spring fever.

A mistake can have queer effects. For instance, one farmer turned on the lights for both sexes at the same time. As a result, when the birds were put together most of the stags simply ignored the wildly flirtatious hens. The few who did realize spring had come a little early found themselves with 2,000 prospective brides. Gamely, each went up to a hen and began the courting dance. After a few minutes, however, their eyes began to waver, and without further ado they broke off their engagements and trotted off to new loves. This went on for days, with the weary stags rushing madly from one hen to another, totally unable to make up their minds.

By mid-February Jack Hewer's flock begins to lay about four eggs a day and the figure rises quickly to 100. After the hens have laid twenty to thirty eggs each, they get broody and have to be confined for a day or two. Production then goes on as before. In all, Hewer gets about 10,000 eggs. Six thousand are sold; the others

go in the incubators. This is Hewer's most nerve-racking period. "Several months' work and several hundred pounds are in the incubators and for four or five weeks you lose hair rapidly"—Hewer has not much left now—"wondering how many poults you are going to get."

On the average turkey farm, about fifty per cent of the eggs are hatched; Hewer's results are slightly better. While the eggs are in the incubators they have to be turned twice a day. Each time it is a two-hour job.

As soon as the poults are hatched Hewer lays finely chopped straw over the floor of the brooder houses to prevent the clumsy, one-ounce babes from breaking their necks. The temperature in these draught-proof houses has to be thermostatically controlled, for it is fatal if it gets the least bit too warm or too cool.

Throughout its existence the turkey is subject to numerous diseases. Among them is a cold called swelled head, which causes the bird to starve to death: swellings in front of the eyes prevent him from seeing his food. This year the damp weather has brought an abundance of blackhead, an ulcerated condition of the liver caused by a parasite. Hewer's birds have even had mumps—"We put them in the dark to cure them."

Straw Pens Prevent Suicides

After a few weeks in the brooders, the young birds are moved out into the two 165-foot by 50-foot main pens. Made of 100 tons of straw bales, they are the specialties of Hewer's system. They took him two months to build and cost £300, "a saving of £5,500 on similar wood pens."

Among other things, he claims that they have largely eliminated one excuse the gobbler has for taking a short cut to eternity: bad weather. He cites the tragedy that befell a friend this year when 500 of his birds did not take shelter in a violent hailstorm and perished in the fields. Hewer himself recalls that after a thunderstorm at Clay-next-the-Sea he found a number of his birds huddled together right outside the large, open door of their hut. Fifteen were dead.

If he has survived, the turkey is by now eating prodigious amounts of food, first of all nettles, then lucerne, marrow stem kale, cabbage, swedes, potatoes and, of course, meal. Hewer's flock consumes more than six tons a day, most of which is grown on the farm. ("Do you know what used to be in their food prewar? Hundred-weights of sugar.")

So far, Hewer has had little trouble from black market raiders. "Except in the slack months of January and February, my wife and I never go out together. We are also both pretty good shots and towards Christmas we take it in turns to get up two or three times in the night and have a look round. Since the war we've only lost two birds."

But the fight against other raiders is unending. Young turkeys are frequently attacked by Spanish owls and jackdaws. One morning, some months ago, Hewer found fifty three-month birds killed by rats; only one had been eaten. As the turkey gets older the fox becomes the main menace. Oddly enough, the suicide-bound turkey will even fly into the arms of these killers.

Jack Hewer tells the story of one farmer he knew who set out to get a particularly persistent fox. "With his gun, this fellow got behind a strategic tree and stayed there for several hours. Eventually, the fox came along with a turkey in its mouth. The farmer raised his gun, but, before he could even aim, a crowd of other turkeys came running after the fox. He couldn't shoot or he would have killed a dozen turkeys, so he shouted to try to frighten them away. Instead, the fox tore off, and bless me if the turkeys didn't go clucking after him."

Hewer sums up: "There's nothing turkeys won't do to get killed. They must be really glad when they're in the middle of that Christmas table. And so am I."

THE END



The salmon now decided to show himself. With a lash of his tail, he jumped clear out of the water. Speechless, Mr. Cork hung on to his rod

SECRET OF THE BLACK BRAE

by
MACDONALD HASTINGS

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL RAINER

Daggers was dead. Robert and Anna faced a new life. And the salmon still waited in the river . . .

IT ALL STARTED with the fish—the salmon of a lifetime that Lt.-Col. Johnson, a veteran angler, was playing in the Scottish River Edendale. He didn't catch the salmon. He caught a corpse, the corpse mistakenly identified as Gabriel Daggers, a half-mad ex-commando.

Daggers meant it to be identified as his body. He had taken out a £25,000 policy on his life with the Anchor Accident Insurance Company, and then he'd murdered his wartime friend, Johnnie Stephens, the man who had helped him loot the fabulous Pongratz jewels during a raid in France.

But Daggers made a mistake. He left the money to Anna Pryde, a young ballerina who fascinated him, on condition that she did not marry for three years. This aroused the suspicions of both Anna and Montague Cork, the middle-aged, deceptively mild-mannered general manager of the insurance company. Accompanied by Robert Shipley, a young employee of his company, Cork went up to the Highlands. There they found Anna, Madame Breuvart, the murdered man's French mistress, and Kurt, a German who had been present when the jewels were looted. The last two were also interested in Daggers.

Now both Daggers and Kurt were dead; they

had gone the same way as Johnnie Stephens and the jewels—into the River Edendale, where, too, the giant salmon, uncaught, still waited to make its destined journey up-river.

FINAL INSTALMENT

New Job For Robert

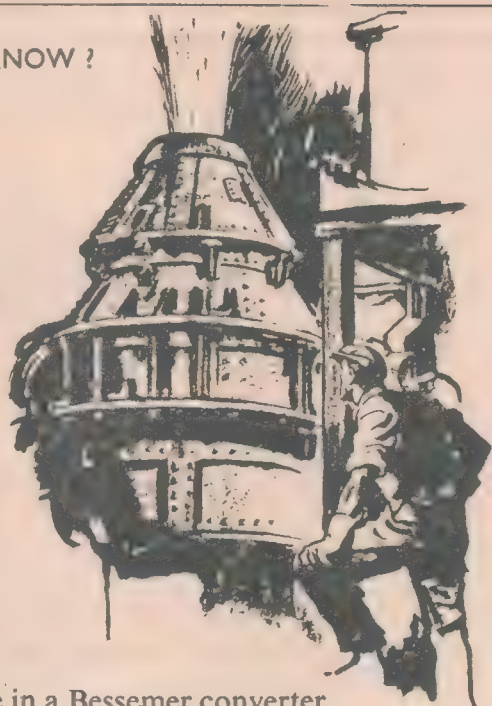
THE date was Saturday, July 30, eight days after Daggers's death, thirty days after the Procurator-Fiscal had officially noted the recovery of his body from the Black Brae. As that bewildered official remarked, when he attended the Estuary Hotel to conduct his later inquiries into the startling series of fatalities at Edendale: in the case of Daggers, the man was now undeniably deceased and, fortunately, it was therefore only necessary to alter the dates on the existing records.

He passed on, wearily, to review the evidence in the cases of the other people who had perished violently between approximately the twenty-eighth ult. and the twenty-sixth inst. in the vicinity of the pool known as the Black Brae.

Representatives of the Allied Control Commission in Germany concerned with the recovery of the Pongratz jewels; motor engineers required

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ?

Can cold air heat metal?



YES, when steel is made in a Bessemer converter.

A blast of cold air is forced through molten iron and raises the temperature by as much as four hundred degrees Fahrenheit. This burns out the impurities and changes the iron into steel. So high is the temperature produced in the converter that it would melt a garden roller like a lump of sugar.

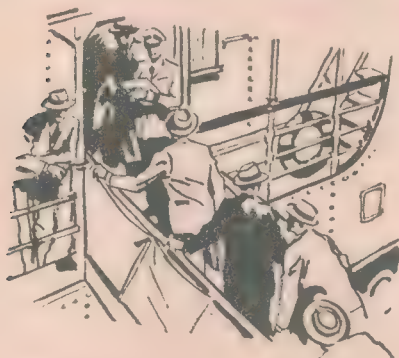


HOW hard can a hammer hit?

Steam hammers used for forging steel can strike a blow of 100 tons but the workers operating them can make them tap a watch glass without breaking it.

A Fence around the Earth

The amount of barbed wire for fencing made in Britain in 1949 would go $1\frac{1}{2}$ times round the earth. A great deal of it goes to New Zealand. It helps to pay for the wool we need for clothes.



Do young steel men travel far?

Many young steel men and students are sent abroad each year by the industry under a regular exchange scheme. They go to France, Belgium, Luxemburg, Holland, Germany and Sweden, and also as far as Australia. This scheme is just part of the industry's training programme to extend general as well as technical knowledge. Progress in British Steel depends on the skill, enterprise and knowledge of all who help to make it.

BRITISH IRON AND STEEL FEDERATION

57



In Skill and
Enterprise

STEEL

is serving you
well

to give expert evidence and to superintend the recovery of Mr. Cork's Bentley; officials of the Crown Office in Edinburgh; the Press, the police, the lawyers and the specialists all converged on Edendale and gathered, like wasps round a jampot, in Mr. Mackenzie's Estuary Hotel.

They slept two and three to a bedroom, they dosed on sofas, and parked themselves out in every croft and cottage where there was an iron bedstead to spare. The single-track road up the glen was never free of cars, reversing and manoeuvring to pass each other on the journey between Edendale and the outside world. The bracken round the Black Brae was trodden flat by an invasion of experts with cameras and tape measures, and all the scientific paraphernalia of a modern police inquiry.

Mr. Mackenzie, at the hotel, had never coined so much money, and the inhabitants of Edendale, watching all the comings and goings from the bridge, were so diverted that there was no salmon poaching in the district for almost an entire week.

Anna was taken away to the cottage hospital at Dornoch. Robert, after forty-eight hours in bed, insisted that he was fit again, and stood by his boss during the ordeal of making statements and answering questions. Madame Breuvart, faithfully protected by Mr. Cork, returned to France. And, at last, the official inquiries were concluded.

THE last page of evidence had been taken. The swarm of officials and journalists had dispersed with the remaining bottles of Mr. Mackenzie's special quota of whisky safely tucked away under their belts. And, finally, as if to restore an atmosphere of homely reality to Edendale, after the macabre adventure of the Black Brae, Mr. Cork's wife, Phoebe, had arrived unexpectedly from London, with another car and fresh supplies of clean, warm underclothes, to resume charge of her devoted husband.

Phoebe put flowers in the bare sitting-room; saw to it that the hotel staff put hot water bottles into damp beds; pottered off to Dornoch to make sure that Anna was well looked after; brought up Dr. McCluskie to the hotel to treat Robert; found out where Mr. Mackenzie could get fresh vegetables for the hotel in place of the usual diet of mashed swedes, and became the friend and confidante of everybody from Jock, the hall porter, to Lieutenant-Colonel Adrian de Crecy Johnson.

It was Colonel Johnson's suggestion that, before they went south again, Mr. Montague Cork should take a day's fishing on the headwater loch. The river which, as a consequence of the cloudburst, had been a torrent only a week before, had now dwindled, as quickly as it rose, to a sluggish trickle. The water was thin. The stones on the bottom were green with flannelweed. And the fish, said Johnson, were too sick to look at a fly.

But Colonel Johnson was optimistic of the chances in the loch. The spate of a week ago, he calculated, must have brought a lot of new fish up the river into the headwater.

Phoebe organized a picnic basket, and she, Mr. Cork and Robert set out in the car.

Robert's mind had tended to be one-track for the last few days. "Why can't I go and see Anna?" he asked Mr. Cork, as he drove to the loch.

"Keep your mind on the driving, Robert," said Mr. Cork.

"Doesn't Anna want to see me?"

"Anna's been very ill, Robert," said Phoebe.

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Listen," Mr. Cork intervened.

"Take the advice of an old man. I

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Strictly personal

SOMEONE once said that the epitaph of the average man was: "Died at thirty, buried at sixty!"

It's a tragic thing, but the ability to converse well and discuss serious subjects intelligently seems to get worse rather than better—despite more and more education.

Widespread intellectual laziness is a serious thing—the open door to every enemy of progress and spiritual freedom. The remedy? That's up to you. It's strictly a personal problem.

by **ROFFE THOMPSON**

think it's very improbable that a famous and beautiful ballerina, chased as she must be by half the eligible young men in London, is likely to be interested in a feckless and penniless insurance clerk."

"She fell for Daggers," said Robert sullenly.

"Yes, and in consequence she's had a very horrible experience. That's another reason why you should keep out of the way."

"Leave her alone for a little while," said Phoebe, patting Robert's shoulder.

"Wait till she asks to see you."

"Suppose she never does?"

"She will," said Phoebe firmly.

"She asked me a number of very pertinent questions about you only yesterday."

"What!" cried Robert, the car swerving dangerously.

"Anyhow," said Mr. Cork, electing not to notice, "what you should be thinking about is your job."

ROBERT thought so, too. It seemed the moment to be intelligent, if he could, about the insurance business.

"So we won't have to pay out on Daggers's life insurance after all?"

"It's highly questionable, Shipley, whether the underwriters can be called upon to pay a claim on an insurance policy which it can be proved was taken out with the intention to defraud, even though the insured's intentions worked out differently from the way he expected. As a matter of public policy, it would be improper that people should benefit, even indirectly, from a piece of villainy. And, if the matter went to arbitration, it's my conviction that the Law Lords would find in our favour. But the matter won't go to arbitration."

"You mean because Anna doesn't want the money?"

"So she says. But we'll have to pay out something on this."

"To Anna?"

"No, Robert, to you."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"He's going to give you a lump sum as a reward for what you've done towards clearing up this business," said Phoebe.

"I was about to say, before Phoebe butted in, that it is my intention to recommend to my fellow directors..."

"Oh, shut up, Monty," said Phoebe. "Robert understands."

"I want to say, sir..." said Robert, struggling to express himself.

"I want to say..."

"Say it another time," said Mr. Cork. "You know where you are. This

is the hairpin bend we're coming to before the bridge over the burn. We're back on the Black Brae."

The memory of what had happened along that stretch of landscape was too poignant and too real for comment. But Robert, exhilarated by Mr. Cork's promise, was stirred with curiosity as he looked again at the desolate place where they had all lived so violently, and come so very near to death.

"Looking back on it all," Robert said, "one thing I still can't understand is how Daggers managed to kill his man and make his getaway as he did."

"It was only possible," said Mr. Cork, "because Daggers was so confident that, having once got his victim here, he would be undisturbed. We know, from our own experience, how deserted this glen is."

"But what happened?" said Robert.

"Nobody will ever know exactly," said Mr. Cork, "but it must have happened something like this. When Johnnie got here, by arrangement, in a hired car, Daggers was waiting for him. He gave his victim a friendly welcome and led him down to the Black Brae. Once there, Daggers got behind him, which wouldn't have been difficult because the man was unsuspecting, and brained him with a blow, probably with his metal gaff.

"After that, Daggers stripped off his victim's clothes and his own. He dressed the murdered man in his own gear and, hauling him into the water, spiked his body on the poacher's hooks at the bottom of the pool. Remember, he was a powerful swimmer and the water at that time, according to Johnson's diary, was low; nearly as low as it is now.

"Once he'd got rid of the body, Daggers put on his victim's clothes and had a last look round to make sure that no incriminating evidence was left behind. He found his rod which, after stripping off line to suggest that he'd been drowned playing a fish, he plunged into the bottom of the pool. Next, he had to get rid of his fishing bag. The fishing bag was lightly weighted and he couldn't make it sink. So, finally, he loaded it with stones to make sure it remained on the bottom. As we know, the weighting of the fishing bag was one of Daggers's mistakes.

"He'd already ensured that they wouldn't miss him at the hotel. He simply climbed into his victim's car, drove it back to London, and returned it to the hirers in the ordinary way. And, of course, they suspected nothing. From their viewpoint, there was nothing to suspect. The car was properly used, paid for and returned."

"What about the mysterious figure that Colonel Johnson saw, or thought he saw, when he found the body?"

"It must have been either Daggers or Snatcher. Presumably, Daggers wanted to make sure that the plan had succeeded."

"And it very nearly did, didn't it?" said Robert. "The wonder is that he was ever caught."

FOR a few minutes, Mr. Cork was silent, thinking about it. Then he said slowly: "Not really. Admittedly, it was bad luck for him that Madame Breuvart got on to his track. He couldn't have anticipated that. But the weakness in his whole plan was that he couldn't bring himself to part with Anna. It was the will, and the insurance policy, that distressed Anna into talking and, in consequence, put us on the scent. Even then, Daggers might have fooled us but for the fact that he was drawn back to the Black Brae. He couldn't resist the temptation to follow Anna

to Edendale and to keep an eye on his precious jewels."

"In some ways, he was rather an attractive devil, wasn't he?" Robert said.

"You noticed that?"

"He was a good fighter."

"Daggers, like you, too, Robert, was one of the products of a world war. In you, war confirmed your good qualities. In Daggers, it had the opposite effect. He found out that he was more courageous, more ruthless, more cunning in battle than the men around him. He rejoiced in the dangers of war and the lawlessness of it. The chance that put the Pongratz jewels in his possession was, for Daggers, the unhappiest chance of all. It confirmed him in his opinion of himself. With the spiritual superiority he believed he had, he now had the material advantage over his fellows, too. He dedicated himself to the possession of material power: the Pongratz jewels and, yes, poor Anna, too, because I'm certain that, in Daggers's mind, Anna was identified as nothing more nor less than a piece of beautiful jewellery. She was something he owned, like the Pongratz jewels. And he meant to keep both.

"When the German gang threatened possession of the jewels, and Johnnie, whom he thought dead, turned up to collect his share, Daggers got the idea of disappearing; of throwing one lot of dangerous enemies off his track by substituting the body of another in the Black Brae. And, while he was doing that, he planned to hold Anna against the future by taking out an insurance on his life."

"That was his biggest mistake," said Phoebe. "When he did that, he brought you into it, dear."

But she was not looking at her husband. Her eyes were on Robert's reflection in the driving mirror. He was grinning rather idiotically.

MR. CORK was lazily fishing the deep waters of the loch. The wind, gently ruffling the surface, as Colonel Johnson had promised, was blowing up the glen from Edendale. Robert, amidsthips in the rowing-boat, leaned on the oars, controlling the drift. Phoebe sat in the bow, quietly knitting. Mr. Cork, perched on a revolving stool in the stern, cast his fly and allowed the confection of feathers to twist and glitter invitingly a few inches under the surface of the water.

Overhead, a kestrel hovered. Far away, at the other end of the loch, a salmon made a tempting splash as he leapt clear out of the loch.

Mr. Cork looked across at the fish hopefully. As a consequence, he failed to notice the fish rising, at that moment, to his own fly. Phoebe saw the swirl in the water and gave a startled exclamation. But Mr. Cork knew nothing about it until his rod jumped madly to life in his hands. The fish had hooked itself. Mr. Cork raised his rod point just in time to give his reel a free run for the first rush.

"He's a whacker," he said excitedly.

"Now keep quite calm, Monty dear," said Phoebe evenly. "You haven't got him yet."

"Of course I haven't got him," said Mr. Cork, cantankerously. "Don't be silly, Phoebe. I'm simply saying he's a whacker. Quick, Robert, row like hell. He's coming back to us."

Mr. Cork raced his reel to take up the slack which the fish had given in his second rush. Robert, pulling at the boat, tried to draw away from the fish.

"I'm afraid he's underneath us, Mr. Cork. Take it slowly."

As Mr. Cork wound in the last of the slack, and felt again for his fish,



ON REFLECTION

"How pleasant of gay Mrs. Gay
To send me a flashing 'Good-day'!
Such a bright piece of brass!
—And I note as I pass
That she cleans it the much cleaner way".

BRASSO

The CLEANER way with brass and copper

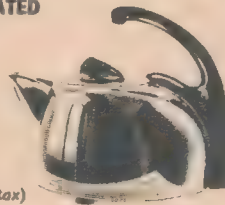
ELECTRIC IDEAS FOR

Christmas presents



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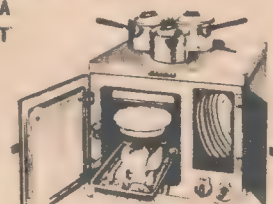
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the line scraped the bottom of the boat.

"I'll keep on rowing backwards," said Robert. "And don't nag at him. If we're careful, he might lie doggo."

"Don't give me orders, Robert. I can manage the fish all right. Row, man, row."

"Now don't get over-excited, Monty. You know what you are. You're impatient."

"Of course, I'm impatient," said Mr. Cork. "So would you be. If I didn't get excited, I wouldn't come fishing."

The boat was now clear of the line and Mr. Cork increased the play of the rod. The line started to move in the water.

"He's off again," shouted Mr. Cork. But he needn't have spoken. The reel whizzed in his hand and the line was carried off across the loch. Mr. Cork saw with apprehension that the reel had run out to the backing.

"He's making for the reeds," said Robert. "If he gets in there, we've had it."

"If you'd only keep on rowing, Robert, and stop talking, we might turn him. Look, he's turning now. Oh, heaven," said Mr. Cork, winding madly at his reel, "this excitement's killing me."

The mad chase round the loch went on till Mr. Cork's arms were aching and Robert was sweating with his efforts to keep the heavy old boat moving with the fish. But, at last, under the steady pressure of Mr. Cork's powerful split-cane rod, the salmon was answering the turn of the reel. As Mr. Cork slowly wound in, the fish permitted himself to be led quietly by the nose.

"Now's the time you must be careful, Monty."

"I know that, Phoebe. Let me fish my own fish. And don't flourish your knitting about. That's just the sort of thing that upsets a salmon."

"Look out," said Robert. "Here he comes."

Mr. Cork brought the fish within ten feet of the boat. The top of the gut cast showed out of the water. They all leaned over to get a first look at him. And the salmon who, up till now, had fought dourly under the surface, decided to show himself. At the disturbing spectacle of the black shadow of the boat so near him in the water, he made a rush for the surface and, with a lash of his tail, jumped clear out of the water.

BEFORE the fish jumped, Mr. Cork had been in a state of uncontrolled excitement. When he actually saw the girth of it and the length of it, he could no longer speak. He just gulped and, with an intensity which brought the sweat to his brow, he hung on to his rod.

"I think he'll be ready for the gaff soon," said Robert. "Do you want me to take him?"

Mr. Cork could only nod. The fish was now swirling round in tired circles in front of the boat. They could see him quite plainly and he was having difficulty in keeping an even keel. Robert drew out the telescopic gaff and leaned with it over the side of the boat, watching. Once he thought the fish was near enough to make the killing stroke.

In his anxiety he made an unsteady stroke with the gaff. The fish gave a plunging roll and, for one unspeakable moment, it looked as if he was away. But Mr. Cork still had him on. In grim silence, he brought the fish to the boat again and, easing the pressure on the rod, let him slip towards Robert. There was no doubt this time. He laid the gaff over the thick of the great hogback and, with a steady lift, heaved the fish into the boat.

Phoebe clapped her hands and cried



for joy. Robert grinned inanely. Mr. Cork, with glassy eye and trembling limbs, collapsed into the bottom of the boat and felt in his hip pocket for a cigarette. He lit it shakily. Then he sat on his stool filling his eyes with the salmon of his lifetime and of most other fishermen's lifetimes, too.

"Have we got the scale with us?" he asked Phoebe.

"It only goes up to fifty pounds," said Phoebe.

"It can't be more than fifty pounds," said Mr. Cork, in a whisper.

Robert took the brass scale and hung the salmon on the hook. With a sharp jolt, the button was pulled to the maximum. They all looked at it with wondering eyes.

"He's a good deal more than fifty pounds," said Robert. "We shall have

to wait till we get back to the hotel to weigh him properly."

But Mr. Cork wasn't listening. He was looking at the salmon.

"There's only one salmon in the river as big as that one," he said. "Do you realize what we've done? We've killed old Johnson's fish."

APPENDIX

Monograph by Lt.-Col. Adrian de Crecy Johnson (rtd.) on a Specimen Fish with Some Additional Notes on the Life Cycle of the Atlantic Salmon

The most notable fish of the season 1949, which was otherwise uneventful, on the River Edendale, Sutherland, N.B., was the capture by Mr. Montague Cork, a visiting angler, of a cock fish of fifty-seven pounds three ounces. Taken by fair fishing, on a Hardy-tied No. 7 L.W. Blue Charm, this is the biggest fish which has been killed on the Edendale within living memory and probably the best summer fish taken in the British Isles for many years.

Every angler will wish to extend his hearty congratulations to Mr. Cork. Every angler, too, will wish to learn the fullest and most accurate details; the more so, in view of certain misleading rumours which have gained currency as a consequence of the inevitable public interest in this remarkable catch.

To the reader, who may be unfamiliar with modern methods of scale-reading, suffice it to say that, under the microscope, any single scale from a salmon reveals a system of ridges, not unlike the markings which are revealed in the severed trunk of a tree: ridges which, to an expert, disclose the growth-rate and various other particulars of the fish's career.

As a consequence of the scale-readings, undertaken by the author of this paper, it may be stated with accuracy that the fifty-seven pound three ounce fish, taken by Mr. Montague Cork in the headwater loch at Edendale on Saturday, July 30, was hatched from the egg in the early spring of 1942.

It is presumably unnecessary to remind the reader that not the least remarkable fact about the salmon is

that the fish normally returns to spawn from its sojourn in the sea to the actual river, and perhaps to the actual gravel bed where it was incubated from the egg.

The scale readings of the fifty-seven pound fish, caught this year on the Edendale, indicate that he went to sea in the summer of 1945 and returned on approximately July 1, 1949.

In the interests of piscatorial history, it is now necessary to correct certain misapprehensions which appear to have been popularly accepted and which are as painful to Mr. Montague Cork as they are defamatory to the author of this paper.

The approximate date of the fish's arrival in the river can be attested personally by the writer because, as early as Monday, July 4, he laid first claim to the fish's capture by hooking it himself eleven miles upstream.

The infamous suggestion that the author of this paper is mistaken in claiming that this was the identical fish afterwards killed by Mr. Cork, containing as it does the implication that the aforementioned may be lacking in experience as an angler and in sportsmanship as a gentleman, is a slander which is both monstrous and unfounded.

It may be stated categorically that the fish which the author hooked in The Aisle on July 4 and the fish which Mr. Cork hooked in the loch on July 30 was the same. Quite apart from the known habit of salmon and the undeniable fact that no fish as large as this one has been seen in the Edendale in the life of the oldest inhabitant, it can be proved by independent witnesses that the writer immediately identified Mr. Cork's fish the moment he saw it; by the betraying scar of a seal-mark on its shoulder.

It happened that when the writer first saw the fish on the stone slab where it had been laid out for examination in the hall of the Estuary Hotel, Edendale, the seal-mark was hidden. On being asked whether, in his expert opinion, this was the same fish which had been previously hooked, the writer immediately referred to the seal-mark which he had particularly observed when he was playing the fish the first time and of which he had recorded a note in his fishing diary. When the salmon was turned over, in the presence of half a dozen independent witnesses, the seal-mark was revealed in the exact position indicated.

It is to be sincerely hoped that this statement of the true facts will put an end to further dispute and discourage idle gossip which has been occasioned, no doubt, largely in consequence of an unhealthy public interest in matters which are outside the scope of a piscatorial paper.

Touching strictly on a piscatorial note it is proper to affirm that, but for an obstacle which snagged the writer's line at a moment when the salmon was perceptibly tiring, the writer himself would certainly have killed the fish on the first encounter. In that event, it might have scaled nearer fifty-eight pounds than fifty-seven pounds, it then being so soon after the fish had ceased feeding in the sea.

It must further be admitted that Mr. Montague Cork, unlike the author, had the good fortune to hook this great fish in open water at a time when he was accompanied by a person able to use a gaff. Obviously, these circumstances materially assisted Mr. Cork's chances; but that in no way detracts from his skill as an angler or diminishes the good wishes of the undersigned.

Adrian de C. Johnson (Lt.-Col., rtd.).

THE END

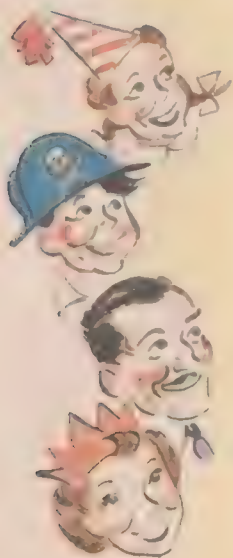
"Secret of the Black Brae" by Macdonald Hastings will be published in book form by Michael Joseph next February under the title "Cork On The Water" (price 9s. 6d.).

New serial next week THE DESPERATE WOMAN

A MAN with a false name is serving, in Germany, a life sentence for a crime he did not commit. A woman searches for him, and uncovers, with the British intelligence officer who befriends her, a vast, international plot.

Starting as a serial in JOHN BULL next week, *The Desperate Woman* is a gripping, dramatic story by Martha Albrand, a writer already known to JOHN BULL readers. Her *Traitor's Island*, serialized in JOHN BULL two years ago, was filmed under the title, *After Midnight*—the fourth JOHN BULL serial adapted for the screen (the others, not yet completed, are *A Sort of Traitors* by Nigel Balchin; *Green Grow the Rushes*, by Howard Clewes; and *Night Without Stars* by Winston Graham).

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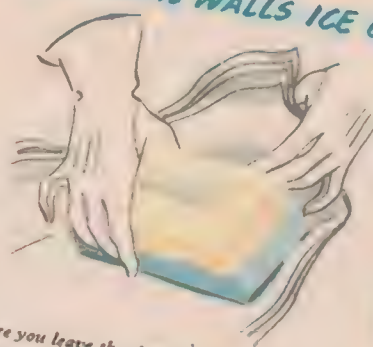
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HOW GLASGOW FOUGHT THE SMALLPOX PLAGUE

Continued from page 8

vaccinated themselves, set out to find the scores of other people who had been in contact with the smallpox victims outside the hospitals. For every case this meant getting a complete picture of the person's activities in the preceding days. Relatives, neighbours, workmates, shopkeepers and, if possible, the victims themselves had to be diligently questioned. Speed was important, thoroughness absolutely essential.

In the Eastern Division Dr. James Gemmill, a small, sharp-featured man with a precise Scots voice, vaccinated the inmates and staff of the Indian Seamen's Hostel and called in a disinfecting squad to deal with the fifty-two beds and bedding. With his South-Western Division colleague, Dr. H. D. Wallace, he then set about tracing the recent history of Moosa Ali. Curiously, they discovered that the disease had been brought undetected to the city by a fluke.

Handsome, thirty-eight year old Moosa left his wife and family at their home in the Laccadive Islands late in January. At Calcutta he signed on with fifty-one other Asians for the crew of the s.s. *Ranee*, a new ship being built at Greenock. On February 5 they left for Bombay. Ten days later they sailed in the London-bound s.s. *Chitral*.

Cases That Were Missed

En route the disease could have been picked up at Aden, where a seaman bought a quilt from a native dhow, or at Port Said, where some men spent a few hours ashore. But the investigators favoured neither of these sources; if he had picked it up at either port he would have fallen ill while at sea, and Port Said was not infected at the time, anyway. The likeliest theory, in their view, was that one of Moosa's shipmates was actually infected at Bombay and passed it on to him during the voyage. "Wherever his infection originated," Dr. Laidlaw said later, "it does appear likely, in spite of the occurrence of only one known case, that there were in the *Chitral* some missed cases of smallpox, probably in a highly modified form."

While Doctors Gemmill and Wallace were conducting this inquiry, Dr. Weir's team took up the trail of Mrs. Toner. Having satisfied himself that the Toner contacts were all traced, Dr. Weir drove on to Knightswood to check on Cathie Wilson's movements. He was told that she had not left the building on the day before she sickened. Questioning her colleagues, however, he discovered that she was to have been a bridesmaid the previous Saturday and she had spoken of sending her dress in advance. Apprehensively—clothing is a fine carrier of the smallpox virus—the doctor phoned Cathie's mother at the compound. Luckily, her daughter had posted the dress a fortnight earlier "so that it wouldn't be dirtied at the hospital or borrowed by one of the nurses." (On April 15, five days after her daughter died, Mrs. Wilson had a letter from the Glasgow Transport Department, saying they had a parcel for her. It turned out that that had been packed by Cathie on the day she fell ill. She had given it to Nurse Lorenzen to post and she had accidentally left it on a bus. It contained underclothing and a birthday present.)

The movements of Sister Binnie, the ward nine sister, Dr. Weir then

learned, had been considerably more extensive. She had been home to Rosyth for the weekend. Fortunately, she was still well enough to give accurate details.

In the Northern Division, Dr. McMillan's squad, seeking out Ian Cameron's contacts, had an early shock. In the eight days between his discharge from Knightswood and his admittance to Belvidere Hospital, Ian had been back to St. Columba's School. There were 1,100 pupils—1,100 first-line contacts. That afternoon they had an unusual imposition; they were detained while Health Department clerks finished reeling off vaccination consent forms for them to take home to their parents. In the evening the inspectors and nurses followed up the forms with personal visits. They told the parents, too, to go to the Health Department and get vaccinated.

The First Baby Victim

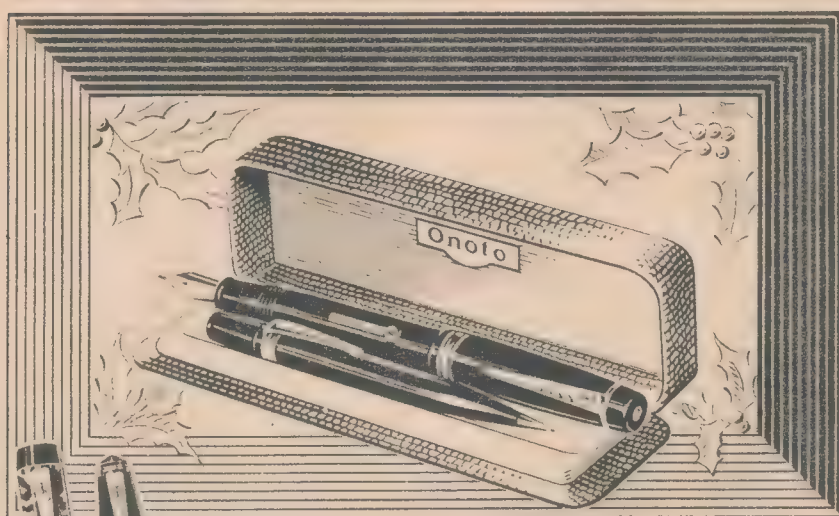
Back at the department, it was rumoured during the day that Dr. Anderson, the consultant who examined Moosa Ali, was ill. At two thirty, two medical officers ordered an eleven-month-old baby girl to be removed from Stobhill Hospital to the smallpox compound. Hers was a pathetic story. While in Stobhill suffering from toxoplasmosis, she had caught chickenpox and had been moved to Knightswood on March 14. Ward two had been full at the time and she had spent thirty-six hours in the same cubicle as Moosa Ali. She had recovered by the twenty-fourth and had been taken back to Stobhill to continue the treatment for toxoplasmosis. Though she had no smallpox symptoms when the Health Department doctors saw her, in view of her close contact with the Indian they sent her to the compound. A few hours later she sickened.

All over the city the sanitary inspectors were gradually ticking off the names on the hospital lists. Often visiting houses two, three and even four times before finding anyone in, they frequently called out the medical officers to examine contacts. Most were false alarms; mention of smallpox quickly produced imaginary symptoms.

Numbers Were Creeping Up

But in the late afternoon and again at seven thirty on that Monday, two positive cases were found. They knitted into the pattern perfectly: both nine-year-old Michael McBarron and thirty-five year old James Campbell were ex-ward nine, Knightswood, patients, discharged on March 20 and 18 respectively. Ignoring the time of day, Doctors Weir and McMillan immediately followed up with the vaccination and disinfection routine. McBarron's contacts involved three widespread households; he had visited two aunts. Campbell had been to a football supporters' club concert the previous evening with a Knightswood wardmaid and, on the way, they had met her brother-in-law in the street. Interrogating Campbell further, Dr. Weir zealously noted an hour's discrepancy between the time he and the girl arrived back in the city and the time he had got home. Without thinking, he asked: "What did you do in that hour?" Campbell blushed and stammered: "I was—er—bidding my friend good night."

While Dr. McMillan was busy elsewhere, Dr. Elias Bloch, the South - Eastern Division medical officer, answered a call from one of his colleague's inspectors. The contact concerned, the three-year-old



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daughter of a Mrs. Collins, a part-time nurse in Knightswood's ward nine, had a rash. The doctor diagnosed measles. As a safeguard, however, he took the girl and her mother to the Health Department for vaccination. As he was leaving after taking them home, Mrs. Collins commented casually that she had been having a touch of backache. The doctor made a cheering reply.

Back in his office about an hour later his subconscious suddenly threw up a startling thought: Mrs. Collins's backache might well be the onset of smallpox. He drove back to the house and examined her. Sure enough, she had a slight rash. (However, it was not until two days later that he was satisfied it was smallpox and sent her to Robroyston.)

Late that Monday afternoon Dr. Laidlaw, the chief medical officer, called a Press conference. He announced that, "in view of the widespread nature of the outbreak," a public vaccination centre would be opened at the Health Department in the morning. It would be open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. He appealed particularly to the people who might have travelled on buses with Sister Binnie to make use of it.

People Took News Calmly

Towards midnight, Dr. Anderson, the Knightswood consultant, was moved to the Robroyston compound, after various diagnoses of flea-bites and food rash had been ruled out. At twelve fifteen, Joan McLeod, the twenty-two year old Knightswood nurse who first discovered Moosa Ali's rash, followed him.

Glasgow took the news of the outbreak next morning quite casually; 830 people went to the vaccination centre during the day. There was a lull in new cases and the Health Department thankfully tried hard to get abreast of the situation. Dr. Weir located the contacts of Dr. Anderson and Nurse McLeod. He also sent some inspectors to try to find the crews of the buses on which Sister Binnie had travelled to and from Rosyth.

The sanitary inspectors, who only twenty-four hours earlier had plodded through miles of streets, now retraced their footsteps, for all the contacts had to be kept under daily—sometimes twice daily—surveillance.

At 5 p.m. on the Tuesday, Dr. William Horne, the deputy chief medical officer for Glasgow, called the divisional heads together for a conference. On a map on the conference room wall the location of every contact was plotted and the officers had to ensure that all of them had been seen at least once during the day.

Vaccine Was Rushed In

Shortly after the conference, 10,000 doses of vaccine which had been requested from Oxford's Lister Institute arrived at the Department. For the second night in succession most of the medical officers did not get home until well after ten.

Once or twice during those first days of the outbreak the situation came pretty close to getting out of control. Calls on the medical officers' time were unending. Everything demanded priority—contacts of the first victims, contacts of the new cases, calls from general practitioners, calls from sanitary inspectors. Obviously, everything could not have priority. To keep control, the officers had to be ruthless in their decisions. By the conference on Wednesday, the fourth day of the outbreak, order was coming out of the confusion.

However, there was no respite. In

the last few hours four more victims had been found. All were associated with Knightswood: Margaret Davidson, a ward two nurse; Albert Harrison, an eighty-three year old pneumonia patient in ward nine; Isabel Lloyd, a nineteen-year-old laundrymaid; and Dr. Bloch's patient, Mrs. Collins.

Glasgow's 1,250,000 were still not taking the outbreak very seriously. During Wednesday only 1,027 were vaccinated at the centre. Shortly after midnight the smallpox ambulance rolled down to Knightswood again. It took back yet another nurse from ward two—twenty-year-old Christie McLeod.

Bright and early the next morning—Thursday, March 30—the Health Department investigators set about locating the contacts of the new victims. Dr. Bloch's squad vaccinated the staffs of twelve shops, two cinemas and a nursery which Mrs. Collins had visited, and twenty-two people who had called on her.

Dr. Weir and his squad were having an embarrassing time following in the footsteps of Nurse McLeod. She had spent a large part of the previous Saturday scouring the lingerie departments of the city's big stores for a pair of black nylons.

Isabel Lloyd alarmed the investigators. It could not be proved that she had had contact with either of the infected wards. Just as the investigators were getting seriously worried, they stumbled across a clue—Miss Lloyd's work, the laundry. They then discovered that when Moosa Ali had been moved from ward nine his nightshirt had not been sent for disinfection. Instead, it had been put in the dirty linen bin. Isabel had handled the nightshirt on the morning of March 15. She had sickened exactly twelve days later.

Whole Streets Panicked

With Thursday morning's newspapers reporting the five new cases in rather louder terms, the first sign of public fear came to the Health Department. A woman frantically phoned Dr. Gemmill, saying her eight-year-old son had smallpox. When the doctor arrived at the house the whole neighbourhood was in a panic. Word had quickly gone up and down the streets and whole households had hurried off to get vaccinated. Some close neighbours had ostracized the distracted woman and were standing guarding their families outside their homes. Dr. Gemmill diagnosed the spots as nothing more than an allergic rash.

The morning brought more unpleasant news, this time from the compound. The clinical reports showed that three patients were seriously ill. Then, at a quarter to eleven, the Health Department got a terrible shock. Up till that time all the victims had so far been among known contacts of wards two and nine at Knightswood. Thus, from the epidemiological viewpoint, the outbreak was under control and there was no need for mass vaccination.

But at ten forty-five that morning a general practitioner phoned from the Eastern Division, asking for a medical officer to have a look at a Miss Margaret McGinty. She had a rash which sounded remarkably like smallpox. "I'm a bit suspicious," he added, "because Miss McGinty says she's been visiting someone in ward nine at Knightswood regularly until about a week ago."

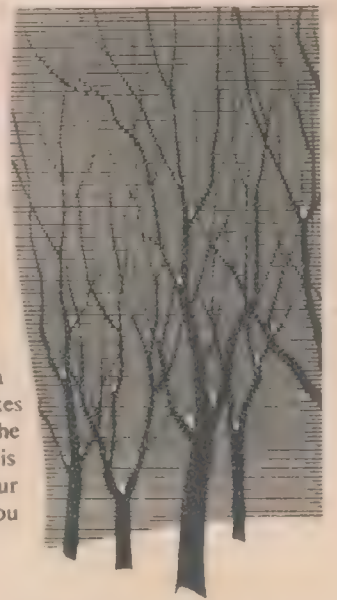
The investigators hastily scanned the hospital lists. They could find no Miss McGinty.

NEXT WEEK: The dramatic decision: "We must vaccinate everyone."

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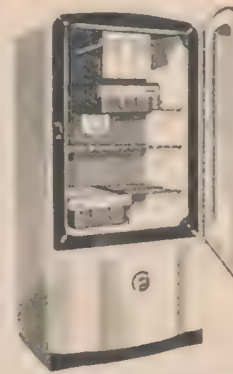
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YANGTSE INCIDENT

Continued from page 16

on the Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese Nationalist Navy, Admiral Kwei Yung Ching. Now he carried a letter of authority in his pocket: *This is to certify (it read in Chinese) that Lieutenant-Commander Kerans is proceeding on a tour of investigation along the river in connection with the shelling of the British warship by the bandits. All our warships along the river, and our land organization, are hereby requested to provide him facilities. It was signed by the admiral.*

At Chingkiang, Kerans's first call was on the Nationalist Naval Chief of Staff. He was a short, pleasant little man who had been trained in the United States and spoke excellent English. "I understand," Kerans said to him, "that there are twenty British naval ratings in hospital here." (Kerans had been told this in Nanking.)

"I'm sorry." The Chinese officer smiled apologetically. "This is not so."

"But—are you sure?"

"Quite sure. I would be the first to know of such a thing." He soon convinced Kerans that a mistake had been made.

"All right, then," Kerans said. "Can you help me get my medical supplies to the Amethyst? Can you take me there in one of your naval craft?"

The little Chinese had a mobile face. It was hung heavy with regret. "So sorry," he said. "All our naval craft have been damaged except for a few which are far too slow for the job."

It was no use trying to convince him otherwise. "May I telephone Nanking?" Kerans asked finally.

"Certainly."

Kerans phoned Captain Donaldson, the naval attaché to the Embassy. He explained the situation. Donaldson said: "Too bad. At any rate, a U.S. naval doctor has been lent to us. He's coming down with more medical supplies. Perhaps he can give you a hand."

Nothing To Do But Wait

The Nationalist naval headquarters in Chingkiang was a large, solidly built, two storeyed, western-style house near the waterfront. Chingkiang itself was a walled city, once a treaty port but now suffering from decay. It was on the south bank of the Yangtse. Kerans waited in a large, sparsely furnished room. There was nothing he could do for a while and he was very tired after the rough trip down from Nanking. He sat down on a hard bench beside Dewar-Durie. The two sat side by side in silent dejection.

After a while a Chinese sub-lieutenant came into the room. He was about twenty-two but looked younger than that. His uniform was very similar to the British naval uniform. When he saw Kerans he came over, his white teeth gleaming in a broad grin of welcome.

"You are the British officer?"

"Yes."

"Ah! I have some information for you."

"About Amethyst?"

"Yes. I was alongside her this morning in a landing craft. I asked if I could take away the wounded. The captain said no."

"I see," Kerans said. It was good to get even second-hand news of the ship. "I have medical supplies. Could you take me back to Amethyst with you?"

The sub-lieutenant shook his head. "Our craft are much too slow. I was under fire on the way back this morning and was lucky to escape."

At three that afternoon Kerans telephoned Donaldson again. "I can't get out to Amethyst," he reported. "There's nothing further I can do here. I'll be returning shortly. Is that all

JOHN BULL December 2 1950

right?" He felt, unhappily, that his mission had failed.

"O.K., come on back," said Donaldson. . . .

Some three hours after Heath's party left Fang-lo-ching, they arrived after a tiring march at a village called Wutsin. It had grown very cold with the setting of the sun. They rested at Wutsin for a while. At half past twelve in the early morning of April 21, a small steam motor boat chugged in to take the party across Hsiao-ho Creek. A Chinese medical orderly said to Heath: "You no take wounded."

"Of course I'll be taking the wounded."

"Not those two," the orderly insisted. He waved an arm towards the barn and the hut where Bannister and Martin were resting. "Won't stand more journey." There was very little time for Heath to make his decision. *The medical bloke ought to know*, he reflected doubtfully. "All right," he said. "I'll leave them here for the night and send back for them tomorrow."

Some Reach Safety

At the other side of the creek three American-made lorries awaited them. Heath had the half-dozen wounded loaded on one of the lorries. The others piled into the remaining two. Then they sped down the rough roads at fifty miles an hour. They reached Changchow, a large town, at four in the morning. It was pitch black. Heath was met by a Major Li who spoke perfect English. "What can I do for you?" the major asked.

"Can we get the wounded to hospital?"

The major said it could be arranged. Then Heath arranged with him to send back for Bannister and Martin later that day. "We'll get them up here to the hospital," the major promised, "and as soon as they're fit to travel we'll send them on to Shanghai." Heath then felt that the two wounded youths would be in good hands.

That night, Heath's party of evacuees slept between sheets, three men to a bed in the two local hotels. They were exhausted and slept soundly. Next day, Heath was taken to the Nationalist Army Headquarters and had an interview with Lieutenant-General Pai, the area commander for Kiangsu Province. The general agreed to provide a railway carriage to take the large party farther on their way. Heath and his men reached Shanghai without further incident. This was the first party of Amethyst evacuees to reach safety. . . .

A Grim Task

In the early hours of April 21, after Amethyst backed off the mud, she moved about a mile and a half up river and dropped anchor. Instructions had been received to do so. Wilkinson, the engineroom officer, told his men: "O.K. Now we can shut the steam of the main engines." Then he set up a camp bed in the engineroom and tried to get some sleep. Everyone needed it.

Weston sat down once again in the canvas-bottomed chair in the wireless office. He propped his head on a suitcase resting on the desk in front of him and dozed off.

Shortly after daybreak three volunteers set to work at the grim task of collecting the dead together. One of them, Leading Mechanic Albert Garns, went out on the upper deck through the captain's hatch, crouching low. He was afraid of the snipers on the far shore. He stumbled over the body of one of the ammunition numbers. Garns tried to lift the body and as he did a groan seemed to leave the dead man's mouth. Garns almost dropped the body. *He's alive!* he thought. But the body was quite stiff and the man had been dead for some time. The sun was quite

LIVING LANGUAGE

by George Beardmore



WHY WE SAY . . . THE DEVIL TO PAY

THE full expression used to be "the devil to pay and no pitch hot." It was an old seafaring phrase—"pay" and "devil" being seamen's slang-words.

To "pay" a boat means to make it watertight with hot pitch. The "devil" is the seam most awkward to "pay"—that is, the one running along the waterline. So when a sailor found his mate had let the pitch grow cold when waterproofing a boat, he had every right to fly in a rage. For his mate, in fact, there was "the devil to pay."

warm now and the corpses were beginning to throw off the sweet, sickly smell of death. Monaghan brought up a bottle of whisky from the wardroom.

"Better have a tot of this," he said. The three men had a drink. Then they went back to collecting the dead. The bodies which were still in one piece were carried down to X-gun deck by the arms and legs. The others were put into hammocks and carried that way. The men had another tot of whisky. Then the job was done. The bodies were spread around X-gun deck, covered with hammocks and blankets. It had been a hard job to do.

Weston felt almost himself again when he awoke that morning. He was able to move around the ship without Parnell's help. At ten o'clock French, who had had no sleep since the action, picked up a signal which lent *Amethyst* new hope. The signal announced that *London*, a cruiser, and *Black Swan*, another frigate, were on their way up river to help them. The rescue ships would arrive at about eleven o'clock. The men were elated at the news. They knew it would almost surely mean another brush with the Communist guns; but, at least, now they would eventually get out to the open sea. They had no doubt that this time the rescue attempt would succeed and they whistled and hummed and cracked edgy jokes at one another.

Shortly after the signal was received a Nationalist officer came alongside in a small boat and boarded the ship. "We've come to take your wounded to hospital in Chingkiang," he told Weston. As Weston expected H.M.S. *London* to arrive in half an hour, he shook his head. "We don't intend to land any more of our wounded," he said, "unless it is definitely decided that we're not going down river." He said nothing about *London's* expected arrival. The Chinese officer saluted and left.

At five minutes to eleven, *Amethyst* got under way. Excitement on board was feverish. Weston and Hett stood on the bridge, their eyes peeled for the first sight of H.M.S. *London*. *Amethyst*

circled around in the river. The Communists fired a warning shot, however, and she dropped anchor while still remaining on the alert to lift it once more and head at full speed for the distant sea.

At eleven the deep roll of artillery carried up from down river. "London?" Hett said, anxiously. "Hope so," Weston replied. Then they stood there, tensely listening.

At a quarter past noon, French, still on duty in the wireless office, received a message from H.M.S. *London*. The signal said: AM SORRY WE CANNOT HELP YOU TODAY. WE SHALL KEEP ON TRYING.

Gloom descended over *Amethyst* again. . . .

Impassable Barrier

From early morning on April 21 until four that afternoon Bannister and Martin were carried by Chinese bearers. They had no idea where they were being taken or whether or not they were in good hands. Between them and the Chinese was the impassable barrier of language.

At four they were carried into a small, stone house and placed in separate rooms. Presently two lads dressed in Nationalist uniforms—they could not have been older than twelve—came in to see Bannister. They gave him a cigarette and pressed small, pink-and-white frosted cakes into his hands. Bannister tried to eat one of the cakes but after the first tentative bite he knew he would not be able to get it down. He was surprised at the youthfulness of the Chinese soldiers. *They're just babies*, he thought. Bannister was only twenty-one.

The Chinese youngsters seemed disappointed at Bannister's neglect of the cakes. They looked at one another and exchanged a few rapid words in Chinese, and one of them ran out of the room, returning a moment later carrying two eggs. He held them up, one in each hand between thumb and forefinger. He smiled at Bannister as if inviting him to eat the eggs.

Bannister nodded. He was very fond



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of eggs. The Chinese boy gave them to him and made eager signs for Bannister to eat the eggs raw by sucking at them. Bannister shook his head. "No, no," he said. The two lads seemed puzzled. Then one of them lit a match for Bannister's cigarette. Bannister took the match. He held it under one of the eggs to show he wanted to have it cooked. The two boys grinned and chattered eagerly and the same lad who had brought the eggs ran out with them again. In a few minutes he brought them back. They had been boiled. He gave Bannister a small, glazed pottery spoon and Bannister managed to get the eggs down. The boy who had boiled the eggs looked proud and pleased and nodded enthusiastically as Bannister ate.

Alone And Lost

He felt better after that. He indicated that he wanted paper and pencil. He drew a warship, a sampan and a map of the Yangtse. Along the river he marked Nanking, Shanghai and *Amethyst's* approximate position. Then, pointing, he tried to make the boys understand that Martin and he should be taken to Nanking or Shanghai or the ship. He was not able to make them understand.

Bannister knew that he and Martin were alone and lost. *Why did the others leave us?* he wondered. After a while his face became flushed. *Where are we? What's going to happen to us?* He tossed and turned in his stretcher. After dark that night the two sailors were carried away again until they came to the shore of what looked like a quiet lake. Bannister could just see the black shine of the water. Suddenly he heard heavy gunfire. It seemed to come from two directions at once as if two armies, quite far apart, were shooting at one another with artillery.

There was a large sampan on the shore. The Chinese loaded Bannister and Martin into it. A score of Chinese civilians piled in after them. They moved out from shore, scarcely making a sound. It was very quiet; the shooting had died away. The people in the sampan hardly seemed to breathe. Bannister decided they must be trying to slip past an armed outpost without being fired upon. In the dark, the flat, Chinese faces seemed pale and momentarily expectant of disaster.

When the sampan reached the far shore without incident the party of civilians scrambled on to the land and made off into the night. The two *Amethyst* men were carried into a large house for the night. They slept between clean sheets in real beds. But the distant roll of artillery kept waking them up. They talked in whispers from time to time during the night, discussing their chances. The guns were getting nearer.

Into Hospital

Next morning they were taken out to a waiting lorry. Bannister, who was feeling stronger, was helped into the seat beside the driver. Martin, on his stretcher, was put down in the back of the lorry. A soldier put a bag of rice under Martin's head as a pillow.

"Are you O.K., mate?" Bannister asked over his shoulder. "Sure. I'm O.K., Paddy."

They sped along the long, straight, bumpy road at forty-five miles an hour. Every time the lorry bumped Bannister cringed with pain. Soon they came to Changchow, a large town streaming with refugees from the north. The lorry rolled into the walled enclosure of a military barracks and stopped. Bannister and Martin were taken to the Stevenson Mission Hospital in the town and were greeted by the Chinese matron. "I am Mary Wong," she said. The two British sailors were assigned a

comfortable room with spick-and-span white walls and two beds.

That same day Bannister was X-rayed. "We are going to operate on you right away," a Chinese doctor said. "Sure," Bannister said. "Go ahead. The quicker you get the splinter out the quicker I'll be able to breathe." He was still gasping for air. By now the right side of his chest had sunk in noticeably, as if his right lung had collapsed. Bannister was worried about it. There was sweat on his palms.

He was laid out on a white-sheeted operating table. "I'm sorry," the doctor said seriously, "but we have no anaesthetic. It will hurt a lot, but you will feel much better when the job is done."

"Go ahead," Bannister said. Perspiration was collecting on his forehead. The doctor pushed his hands under his buttocks. Two nurses held his arms down, pressing them tightly on to the operating table. Then the doctor bent down and went to work. First he had to enlarge the wound.

Bannister clenched his teeth. He tried to think of distant, happier days at home but the pain erased everything but itself. The doctor pulled the splinter out of the wound slowly, a fraction of an inch at a time. Once his long, shining tweezers slipped on the fragment of steel and Bannister's body lifted with the greater spasm of pain. Then the splinter was out.

The doctor, whose yellow skin was shiny with sweat, held the splinter for Bannister to see. It was about an inch long and half an inch wide and very jagged and sharp around the edges. "There it is," the doctor smiled. As he said it, Bannister took a deep, grateful breath. He felt weak and jaded but very relieved. The right side of his chest, which had been deflated, seemed to pop out to normal as he inhaled. His right lung had started to work again.

Then the doctor attended Martin's wound in the thigh.

Two days later Mary Wong came around to their room. She was pale and nervous. "The Communists," she said, "have captured the town."

Bannister looked across at Martin. "That does it," Martin said. They both had the same thought. *What will happen to us now?*

"It's Up To You"

Shortly after Kerans had hung up on Donaldson, the phone rang again and he was called to it. "Donaldson here," his chief's voice said. "Glad I caught you before you left Chingkiang. Cancel your previous orders. You are to reach *Amethyst* tonight."

"How am I supposed to get there?"

"That," Donaldson countered, "is up to you." He hung up.

Kerans paced up and down the long, bare room. *It's no use trying to get to the ship by water, he thought. One shell and we'd go to the bottom with all the medical supplies.* The supplies were very important. He asked the Chinese sub-lieutenant to locate *Amethyst* on his charts of the river. She was off the mouth of Hsiao-ho Creek. "We can get pretty close to her overland," Kerans said to Dewar-Durie.

At this point the American naval doctor arrived from Nanking. His name was Packard. The hard trip down had put him out of sorts. "I've brought some chests of medical supplies," he said tersely. Kerans had arranged with the Nationalists for the loan of two lorries. "We'll get as close to *Amethyst* in the lorries as we can," he explained. "Then the lorries can transport the wounded back."

They got going late that afternoon. Packard and his sick bay attendant and the Chinese Naval Chief of Staff went

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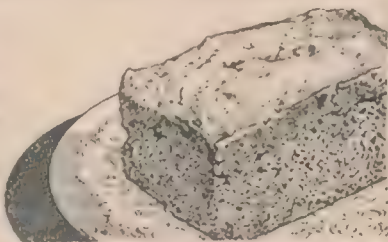
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tablespoonful Sugar. 1 Egg. 1 teaspoonful
"The Orient" Ginger. ½ teaspoonful "The
Orient" Mixed Spice. 2 ozs. Fat. 2 table-
spoonfuls Syrup. Milk to mix.

METHOD. 1. Sieve dry ingredients. Melt the fat, sugar and syrup in a saucepan. Allow to
cool. 2. Add the egg to the dry ingredients, and then add the liquid ingredients, and enough
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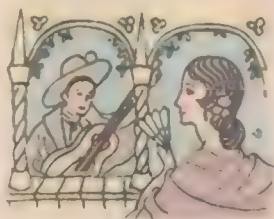
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with them. The road along the river had been constructed not long previously for emergency military use. It was merely a rough, rutted track. The lorries crawled along it at five miles an hour with their motors growling in low gear. At Tachiang the road trailed out into nothing.

Tachiang is a tiny farming village, very poor and smelling strongly of the barnyard. It consists of a few mud huts and little else. Kerans hopped out of his lorry. He arranged with some of the villagers to act as stretcher bearers to bring the wounded out and for coolies to carry the chests of medical supplies in to the ship. The coolies, grunting a little with the weight of the chests, loaded them on two peculiarly Chinese wheelbarrows, distinguished by the single, four-foot high wheel on which each was rolled. There were three coolies to each barrow. One pushed on each of the two wooden arms and one pulled on a rope harness.

The strange procession started out along the narrow, single-file pathways at six o'clock, twisting through the rice fields as daylight began to fade. It consisted of ten Chinese coolies, half a dozen Nationalist soldiers as escort, Packard and his assistant, the Chinese naval officer, Dewar-Durie, Kerans and the two giant-wheeled barrows squeaking a repetitive circular protest.

Kerans was tired before he began the hike. He had had an exhausting day. Very soon he began to shiver in the chill of the early-spring evening. It had been quite warm during the day and he had worn no greatcoat; but with the setting of the sun the temperature had dropped sharply to a point near freezing. Kerans plodded on.

The procession passed through tiny mud villages, each one surrounded by a brick wall. It grew darker and colder. Kerans moved his arms briskly trying to get warm. By now he was getting

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



ravenous. He had brought nothing to eat with him and he silently cursed his carelessness. He must presently have mumbled something aloud.

"What's your trouble?" Packard asked. "Hungry?" The American was following on behind Kerans in the long, hotch-potch, single file.

"Dammit, yes. I haven't eaten since breakfast."

"What? You must be starved. I grabbed some emergency rations when I left Nanking. Turned out to be tinned plum pudding and tinned cheese. Horrible combination, but you're welcome to some when we stop."

"Thanks," said Kerans. "By then

I'll be ready to eat anything. I am now."

At about ten that night they came to the shore of a dark creek. Their Chinese guides had told Kerans that this is where *Amethyst* would be. The ship was not in sight. "Obviously we've made a mistake," the Chinese Naval Chief of Staff said querulously. "I'll ask the people in this hut if they've heard anything about your ship." There was a wood-and-mud hut on the bank of the creek. Candlelight showed through the cracks. The Chinese officer knocked at the door and spoke to a fisherman who came to answer. Then another fisherman edged

take the boy on. He must have got sick of seeing him gawping there and doing nothing.

Monroe was keen—car crazy. With some boys it's cricket, or the radio, or girls. With Monroe there wasn't anything else in the world except racing cars. The sound of one of our jobs starting up and blip-blipping brought a look into his eye. After a while he got himself an old motor-bike which he kept polished like a fire engine. His mother said he took it all to pieces every Saturday and gave it a wash down with paraffin. He was her only son and sometimes in the evening you'd see him riding that machine round—not tearing round but going easy and quietly just listening to the note, kind of satisfied.

WHEN we went over the blueprints of the Tipo I whistled at the compression ratio. You could believe the revs then. But we had to see how this modified chassis would come out with us. I took her out.

Some folk will tell you the Boss is hard on his drivers and that he sweats us out. It's a lie. But all the same, he doesn't like to lose. At the back of his head are the races his father's cars won, and he doesn't like to lose a car or a race. He doesn't like to have to admit the old man was a better man in his day. The Boss doesn't like a floating toe. If you drive for him you drive with your foot right down on the accelerator.

That first day I blew a gasket at 6,000 revs. She was nowhere near her limit. Blowing the gasket was pure Italian temperament. That was when I first began to look for trouble with the Tipo. Monroe helped push

her in. He was doing well at that time. He'd been placed two or three times on the airfield tracks with our E.R.A. He was a good driver, piling up experience—the stuff that counts in the end.

"Any job can blow a gasket, any time," Monroe said. No one had asked him anything.

We took her up in the trailer the following week to Leicestershire and one of our oldest drivers, Morgan, took her round the practice laps. She went over 140 m.p.h. before he had to come off the straight and she came off the top miles as sweetly as she shot up into them.

"We've never had a job like this," Morgan said.

He went out again and, on the third lap, as he was passing the pits there was a crack like a whiplash and he had a belly full of flame under the bonnet. We had it out in no time, of course. The Boss is very strict on pit drill and you'll always find the row of extinguishers lined up like guardsmen.

Morgan's trouser legs were burnt off and he was hopping mad, because there was no reason at all why she should have caught fire.

I phoned the Boss and His Nibs happened to be at home.

"The factory," I said, "sold her because they knew what she was like. You'll have to get rid of her. She's a killer."

There was a pause, then his quiet voice came back at me: "I never sell a car because it is dangerous. Wilson, you're getting old."

But Morgan was finished with her. "Let Mac take her round," he said. "Mac can take her in the race."

Mac took her out the following day. She looked lovely, pretty as a

forward into the doorway and another. The Chinese officer sighed impatiently.

He said over his shoulder to Kerans: "They don't know a damn thing. I'm going to hike back to that last village and check up. You and the doctor and the colonel better wait inside this hut until you hear from me." The last village they had passed was about four miles behind them. Muttering unhappily to himself, and taking two coolies with him as runners, the officer left.

Packard, Dewar-Durie and Kerans entered the hut. "Phew!" Dewar-Durie screwed his face into a grimace. The hut smelled of decay, but it was warm and a relief from the bitter cold outside.

"Might as well try some of this stuff," Packard said. He took some tins out of his knapsack. He opened them and they ate the cold plum pudding and cheese. "It tastes all right to me," Kerans said. He was glad to put something into his empty stomach.

Some time later one of the runners came back from the village with a message. It said they would have to walk back to the village and set off in another direction from there. They walked back. Kerans arranged with the head man of the village to provide food for the coolies. The procession set out again.

It was very dark. Just at midnight, Kerans saw what looked like the quick flash of an electric torch ahead. Then he heard a strange jumble of sound. As he got closer to the sound he realized it was a large group of Chinese, chattering in their sing-song tongue. Near them, he again saw the flash of an electric torch.

Out of the darkness, somebody spoke. "Are you a naval officer, sir?"

It was a British naval rating.

NEXT WEEK: Doc Fearnley flies in under fire. Kerans takes command

THE KILLER

Continued from page 20

in a special wood-block floor garage he had built in the grounds of the mansion here, with strips of carpet in between the old ladies and central heating. He never could bear to part with a car he drove and liked.

Lord Harmer takes a long time to pick a new job, but when he's bought something new—well, that makes it something special. He's given all his life to collecting cars and from the way he'll stare you down you'd think cars were kind of holy. His cars anyway.

The Tipo 6 came crated by B.O.A.C. and the first I saw of her was when we knocked the crate down and wheeled her out on to the concrete floor of our shops here. She would have tempted a saint. She looked a marvellous job, and so she was. Two-stage constant-mesh blower, sixteen cylinders, and revs more like a turbine.

The chassis, through with international racing, had been works-modified for road work. I took her out round the park track and she held the road like suction. She would whine through her gears like starting a rocket. That was the first time young Monroe saw the Tipo 6. I must tell you about him.

Monroe came to our stable straight from school. He was a village boy living with his widowed mother—the father was a sergeant pilot who bought it in the Battle of Britain—and any time he didn't actually have to be in school young Monroe would be hanging around our place. In fact, our chaps could hardly get him out of the place to shut up at night. One day His Nibs said we were to

picture on the track in the sun, moving like a shuttle over the concrete. Her note was as crisp as the crackle of a new banknote and I was beginning to think I was getting old, like His Nibs said, when suddenly we heard her note cut. When we reached Mac he was unconscious with three ribs broken and a five-inch cut over his scalp. The Tipo had snapped one of her beautifully machined wishbone links in the front suspension and turned over into the straw.

"This settles it," I said. "That car goes back to the stable—and now."

"I'm not scared to race her," Monroe said. You could see he was almost crying with rage.

"You'll take my orders, or take your time," I told him.

"Phone the Boss," Monroe said. "Phone the Boss. Go on. Ask him."

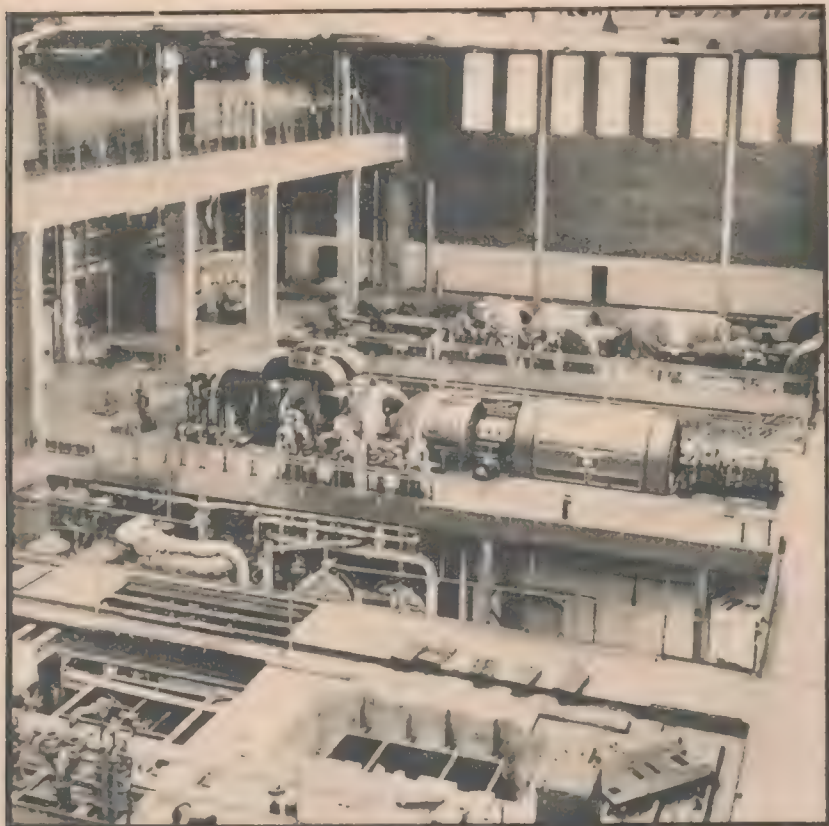
Well, I telephoned him because I had to and what he said back at me was this: "I don't want to hear any more from you, Wilson." Then he hung up.

THERE were two more days. The Tipo blew off four tires. The brakes were free and the wheels nothing out of the ordinary for heat. But the tires were too hot to touch with your hands. We blew four, then the trouble ended as inexplicably as it had started, and every time we tested the tires came in cool. No reason for it.

"It's a run of bad luck," Monroe said. "You're all set against her. . ."

"Monroe is right," His Nibs put in. "It seems I am employing a bunch of old women." He looked at the boy. "How would you like to drive her?"

That's how Monroe got to drive



Completing the first of two new 30,000 kilowatt generating sets at Llynfi, S. Wales.

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NEW PLANT at Llynfi power station. New stations are being built at Uskmouth and Carmarthen Bay. These will more than double the power output of South Wales. More and more power is on the way, but such vast projects take years to complete.

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BUT there is not yet, particularly in cold weather, enough power to meet all demands at peak periods, and industry must have priority. At other times generating plant is waiting to supply your needs. So "Use your Electricity Off-Peak".

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BRITISH ELECTRICITY



the Tipó. It was as simple as that!

Just to show us all, His Nibs himself then took her round and no one was surprised when she blew the cap on her internal rad and filled the cockpit with hot sludge. His lordship managed to pull her up and jumped out to shove his feet in a bucket of water. No one said anything. When he had cooled his feet His Nibs climbed in again. "See that the cap is screwed right down this time," he said, and with that insult he took her round again. This time she fired back through the supercharger and began to look like a bonfire. We put her out.

"Now," I said, "I take it that we scratch our entry."

His lordship said: "If you don't know by now that I never scratch an entry you had better start looking for a job somewhere else."

"That suits me," I told him. I began to peel off my overalls.

"In the middle of a meet?" His Nibs asked.

I hesitated. "I quit as soon as this race is over."

"And that," His Nibs said, "will suit me."

I tried again. "That car," I said, "will kill young Monroe if you let him go on."

He gave me a long look. "Wilson," he said, "neither I nor Monroe is backing out of this race. You can do as you like." He walked away.

ANYONE could see that young Monroe was blind to everything. All he could see was himself driving this much-publicised, magnificent motor car in this top race. And the car was going to kill him... anyone could see it.

We all had a talk with Monroe on the quiet, but it was no good. Monroe was on the line when they started the race that Saturday morning. His Nibs was there, stiff as a ramrod.

The Tipó shot ahead like a rocket. There was nothing there to touch her for acceleration. She went into the first turn well ahead of the field and in the 'first six laps she put herself nearly half a lap ahead of the bigger Talbots. Monroe was flashing past the pits like clockwork with only a few seconds' difference in each lap.

"A magnificent young driver," his lordship said. "Magnificent car." He never was very strong on adjectives.

On the ninth lap Monroe was a lap ahead and pushing up his lead when we saw a red rag of flame trail out behind the trees. Monroe came in with a stream of blood-red fire trailing and ducked out of the cockpit with his head under his arms. We put the fire out and looked to the boss. His Nibs looked at Monroe.

"Carry on," he said.

There's not a great deal more to tell about that race. The Tipó 6 kept well ahead and drew her lead out to a winning stretch. She out-classed every other car in the race and she couldn't help leading. But there was always that jinx. The car was a killer and that's all there is to it. His Nibs wouldn't see it. Nothing meant anything to him except to see his car win. And he had the chance to test his pride on the twenty-sixth lap when the Tipó was two laps ahead of the next car—an old E.R.A., with the Talbots lying fifth, sixth and eighth.

As Monroe came in to fill up, his rear front tire blew off like a hand-grenade explosion. We had a spare wheel on in no time while they fuelled, but the reasonless and inexplicable blow-off shook His Nibs. It had gone off, as it were, under his nose.

"The engine's very hot," Villiers

NOW YOU KNOW



LAYING in logs for the winter fires? Oak is one of the best woods. It burns slowly and solidly for a long time. Ash burns well and chestnut, when matured, gives out a fierce heat.

Beech and birch burn briskly but need to be stored for some months first. Elm logs make poor fires.

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shouted. "Next time we shan't be able to put her out," I said. I meant His Nibs to hear. "She's about due for her last flare. Pity to burn up a good boy with her."

The roar of Monroe taking off drowned everything, but I could see His Nibs's face was hard as stone.

Well, it happened. The Tipó went up again on the twenty-ninth lap. That car seemed to thrive on fires under the bonnet. We flagged Monroe in at the sight of flames under the chassis and he jumped out unhurt. It didn't look at first as if it were much of a blaze, but when we got the extinguishers' stream on it there was a roar and the whole box went up like a lift. We had to back away from the heat. I've never seen such a conflagration. The asphalt was melted for yards round and running with smoky yellow flames.

MONROE was dazed at first, then he came to and started to rave. "You've let her burn, you dirty lot of crooks!" he was shouting. "Where are the rest of those extinguishers?"

I couldn't say anything. The boss was there and he still was the boss. If he hadn't jumped in to help and upset the drill we should have been able to get more extinguishers on the job. As it was, the one His Nibs snatched up was the only one in action before the heat drove us back.

"You've burnt her up!" Monroe kept saying.

"Do you find the smell of that extinguisher nozzle attractive, Wilson?"

I straightened up suddenly. Then I laid the extinguisher aside and looked at him. "I'm responsible for the equipment," I said. "I would say that someone has emptied this particular extinguisher and filled it with fuel. And that that same person had taken good care to disorganize the rest—"

"You are apt, Wilson—as I have often noticed—to say too much. Otherwise a good man. A magnificent fellow. But I understood that you were leaving us?"

"Well, not just yet, my lord," I said.

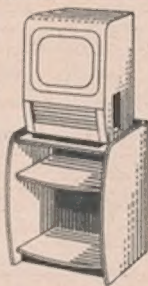
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- Leaves no scum!

and WASHES
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HERE's a thrilling surprise for every housewife! A new Persil is now in the shops.

It's white as snow! It's super-smooth—see how easily it pours from the big new packet! It lathers like lightning! It's always kind to your hands! It leaves NO SCUM, even in hard water!

And new whiter Persil washes even whiter! The results will amaze you. But seeing is believing—it's true! What's more, new Persil washes whiter than anything else you can buy. And that's true, too!

Women who have tried the new Persil are now more certain than ever that, for whiteness, Persil beats all comers, old or new.

COLOURED, TOO! New Persil's magic works for all your wash... makes coloureds brighter, woollens softer, silks silkier. It is gentle to your fine things, too.

Next washday try new Persil for all your wash. See your things come up fresher and sweeter!

SEE the difference! Big new packet doesn't topple over on the draining-board, stands firm. And as soon as you open it, you'll see how much whiter new Persil is! White as snow!

FEEL the difference! New whiter Persil pours more smoothly, dissolves more quickly—needs only a swish to bring up a foamy lather.

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New whiter PERSIL
washes **WHITER!**



PERSIL 1204

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CHRISTMAS, 1949, has lasted all through 1950 for a sixty-three year old Manchester housewife, Mrs. F. J. Short, 53 Ellenbrook Road, Boothstown. Here she is, surrounded by some of those exciting monthly surprise gifts which followed her £750 cheque on Christmas Eve last year, her reward for the *Bullet*: MOTHER BRITANNIA—"HUBBARD," BUT FOR "BACKBONE"!

All this week's 100 cheques, totalling over £1,000, will reach winners on Christmas Eve. And with that huge £750 First, which you can win with your coupon below, goes a novel Christmas Shopping Bonus, enabling you to buy last-minute gifts for all around you without even touching your £750 fortune.

So you, too, can win cause to remember this Christmas for months or years to come. But remember—that £750, the other 99 Christmas cheques, the 6,000 new prizes and the giant 50-lb. Luxury Hampers are within your reach only until Monday, December 11.

OVER £1,000 CASH AND £10 LUXURY HAMPERS in GIANT CHRISTMAS OFFER!



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Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the Examples below. To use an incomplete Example, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

To Britain
Shipwrecked Man
To Celebrate 1951
The Plans We Made
John's Job
Into Life

Forgetting The Way
Sands Of Time
Cruel

In The Fireside's Glow
Fairy Godmother
Playing Safe
Curiouser And Curiouser
Slowed Down

Dad's Car
She's Got Her Faults, But
Intoxicating
Knocked About A Bit
Couldn't Sleep
When The Curate Called

Incomplete "Examples"
—see instructions

Home Of The.....
Good For.....
Did Something To.....
Sea Of.....
Happy In His.....
If..... Were Free

POST ENTRY "Bullets" 1,761 (or Xword 713), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

EXAMPLE	6d.
BULLET	
EX.	6d.
B.	
EX.	6d.
B.	
EX.	6d.
B.	

£10 HAMPER BONUSES A Giant Christmas Hamper accompanies each prize of £2 10s. or over if won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

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1,761 MON., Dec. 11

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ADDRESS.....



RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co., write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fee not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in JOHN BULL, dated Jan. 6, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

INCREASED CASH for CHRISTMAS!

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter one extra Answer to any one, two or three Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

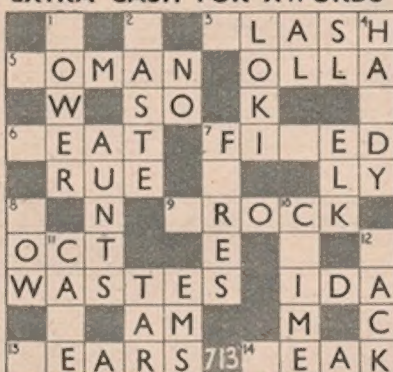
Across Clues XWORD 713

3. Deep-rooted antipathy may suddenly reveal itself in
5. Britain was ruled by, for a great many years
6. This may burn all too quickly
7. It comes as something of a shock when big pot is
9. A man shouldn't keep grumbling to his wife about the expense, if he sees her becoming one
13. The effect of these operating is often to lower stock prices
14. Sudden burst may leave one

Down Clues

1. In Italy you have a famous one which is not too reliable
2. There's really no need for unpleasant this when cleaning one's teeth
4. Relying on Youth Hostels, you need to be fairly this to make the most of your holiday
7. There could easily be a reduction in amount of dirt left behind by these
8. One is not necessarily a tie
10. The nature of this is quite often a depressing one
11. Furniture you get in this shouldn't be very heavy
12. Speed of this can vary somewhat

EXTRA CASH FOR XWORDS THIS WEEK!



CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

Puzzle and Form 713 Closing Postmark, Monday, Dec. 11

I enclose P.O. value... No.....

Signed.....

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In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to one Clue will represent two full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to two Clues will represent four full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to three Clues will represent eight full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of Crossword Gazette dated Dec. 30.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

"Bullets" Winners 1,756

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Hamper: S. J. Lucas, 8 Coronation Road, Wolverhampton:

EPITAPH FOR THE FOREMAN "HE STOOD BY US."

SECOND PRIZE, £50 plus Hamper: A. Warren, 3 Coles Lane, Sutton Coldfield: OUR COAL—Black "CLIFFS" PROTECTING BRITAIN.

THIRD PRIZE, £25 plus Hamper: G. Parker, S.C.E.O.(L) R.N., H.M.S. Devonshire, c/o G.P.O., London: ENDURING—THINGS, BEHIND TREE'S "TINSEL."

OTHER AWARDS: £20: Mrs. A. Smith, Bona Vista, Neville's Cross, Durham: THAT CHRISTMAS FEELING—"SLUSH"? TIME YOU "THAWED"! £15: R. C. Wescombe, 7 Gore Road, Ashton, Bristol: ALL HE WANTED—EXCITEMENT—MONEY—REVOLVER—REPRIEVE! £10: C. Spring, 406 High Street, Burton Latimer, Kettering: THAT CHRISTMAS FEELING—"GOODNESS WITHIN" STIRRING US. £9: C. Jones, 42 Gleton Avenue, West Hove: A BRICK—SUFFERING, "TIED" TO "CAT." £8: A. V. Seeley, 17 Wimbourne Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham: WITH HER BY MY SIDE—POOR? POOR! £7: Miss B. Luxton, 22 Rose Avenue, South Woodford, E.18: LOOKED SO EMBARRASSED—REDBREAST, ON HARWELL WINDOW-SILL! £6: H. Wright, 23 College Street, Northfleet, Kent: SHOCK FOR THE FOREMAN—NEW NAVY'S SHOOTING-STICK! (Above 7 winners each also receive Hamper.) For five winners of £5 plus Hamper, and five of £2 10s. plus Hamper, see "Bullets" Bulletin dated November 25. Winners of 100 Fowls have been notified, and 2,000 "Good Shots" posted.

LYNDA TAKES HER DRIVING TEST

Continued from page 17

which I could not take. The yellow failure certificate stirs up many people. One woman, taught driving by her husband, sobbed: "Oh, I daren't tell him." And a turbaned Indian hawker, who had previously predicted for me "great riches and a large family of beautiful children," cursed my descendants for ever.

We don't argue with L-drivers; it could often lead to blows. But on the back of the certificate and the new application form we mark ways for them to improve. The reasons for failure are usually plain enough—except to the candidate.

Every time one mouselike little woman changed gear, for instance, she gazed long and earnestly at the lever, meantime steering blind all over the road. I once told a candidate that I was sure he had been taught by a bus driver. "Right!" he admitted. Because of its size, a bus keeps to the lefthand kerb before turning right, and takes the crown of the road to turn left—quite wrong for a car.

The Emergency Stop

By the time we were on our way back to the office, there was only one part of the test that I had not given Miss Gaye: the emergency stop. The week before I had failed to brace myself before saying "Stop!" and a driver with particularly fierce brakes had bruised my head on the windscreen. This time a pedestrian stepped off the pavement looking the other way. Miss Gaye pulled up dead, but the woman came on and sprawled against our bonnet.

She was not hurt, but very indignant. This was more than I could resist. Opening the car door, I said: "Don't say we ran over you, madam. You ran over us!"

Forty thousand people are seriously injured on British roads every year, and 5,000 killed. Despite the low wage (starting around £6 15s. and averaging £8 a week), I feel that my job of failing deadly drivers is worth while simply because it helps to keep these figures from rising to even worse heights.

The test is improving British standards of driving. Ahead of us, as we pulled up outside the office, Lynda Gaye and I saw the young man who had got stuck on the hill. Once he would have been a fully licensed menace without needing to take a test. Now he shook his head dismally at his examiner.

"That poor boy in front hasn't passed," Miss Gaye said.

"Don't worry about him—you have," I replied, and wrote out the pink pass certificate. That afternoon she had her provisional licence rubber-stamped as a full one. Then she drove proudly home—without the L-plates.

THE END

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

READERS with personal problems can obtain the help of John Bull's team of experts. Inquiries (other than medical) should be addressed to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

Do not send cash unless registered. Cross postal orders or cheques. Keep counterfoils of P.O.s.

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unbr. glass (with large sweep-second hand 10/- extra).

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